

Prohempe

Reke thankes laude and honoure ought to be ye
By vnto the clerkes poetes and historiagraphs
that haue writen many noble bokes of wisdom
of the tyues passions and miracles of holy seyn
tes of histories of noble and famous actes & faittes. And
of the cronicles sithen the bettyning of the creacion of
the worlde vnto this present tyme. By whiche we ben dai
ly enfourmed and haue knowlege of manye thynges. of
whom we shuld nat haue knowen yf they had nat left to
vs theire monimentes writen. Among whom and ine
special to fore alle other we ought to geue a singuler lau
de vnto that noble and gret philosopher Gessrey chaucer
the whiche for his ornat writing in oure tonge may wel
haue the name of a lauzeate poete. For to fore tha. he by
his laboure enberishid ornatid and made faire our engli
she in this Realme was hadde rude speche & incongrue as
yet it apperithe by olde bokes. Whiche at this daie oughte
nat to haue place ne be compared among his beauteous
volumes & ornat writings. Of whom he made many a
noble historpe as wel in metre as in ryme and prose and
theym so craftely made that he comprehended his maters.
in short quicke and high sentences eschewing prolixite &
casting away the chaf and superfluite & shewing the py
hed grapne of sentence steered by crafty & sugred eloquen
ce. Of whom I among alle other of his bokes the boke of
the tales of Canterburie in whiche ben many a noble hi
storie of wisdom policie mirth and gentilnes. And also
of vertue and holynes. Whiche boke diligently our sen &
duely examined by the polittike reason and our sight. of
my worshipful master William Caxton accordinge to the
entent and effecte. of the seid Gessrey Chaucer. and by a
copp of the seid master Caxton purpos to imprent. By ye
Grace ayde and suppozte of almighty god. Whom I hum

Prohmye

By beseeche. that he of his grete and habundant grace wil
sodispose that I may it fynisse to his plesure laude and
gloze. And that alle we that shalle therein se or rede may
so take & vnderstonde the gode and vertuous tales that it
may so profite to the helth of oure soules. and in special
of the soule of the seid Geffrey chaunce. first autour & ma
ker of this for seid boke. that after this short and transi
torye lyfe we may come to the euirlasting lyf in heuynne
Amen.

By Richard Pynson.



Prologue

W han that Aprille with his showres sote
The droughete of marche hath persed the rote
And bathed euery beyne in suche sicoure
Of whiche vertue engendred is the flour

Whanne zepharus eke with his sote brethe
Enspired hath my euery holte and he the
The tendre croppes and the yong sonne
Bathe in the ram half his cours y ronne
And smale fountes make melodye



That sleppyn al nyght with open eye
So prieth theym nature in their corages
Than longyn folke to goon on pilgrimages
And palmers to seche straunge strondes
To serue hawkes couthe in sondry londes
And specially fro euery shypres ende
Of englond to Caunterburpe they wende
The holy blisful martir for to seke
That theym hath holpy when they wer seke
Yfel in that season on a day

B In suche werke at the taberde as I lay
Redy to wenden on my pylgrimage

To caunterburpe with deuoute corage
That nyght came into that hostelrye
Wete nyne and twenty in a company
Of sondry folk by auenture y falle
In felausship and pilgrames were they alle
That toward caunterburp wolde ryde
The chambres and the stables were wyde
And wele were we eased at the best
And shortly when the sonne was at rest
So hadde I spoken with theym enirichone
That I was of their felausship anone
And made forwarde erly for to ryse

Prologue

To take oure wey there as I you deuise
But neuertheles whyles I haue tyme and space
Dz that I ferther in this tale pace
We thinketh it accordant to reason
To telle you al the condicion
Of ech of theym so as it semed me
And whiche they were and of what degre
And in what aray the they weren ynn
And at a knyght thenne I wille begynne



a knyght there was a worthy man
That fro the tyme that he first began
To ride oute. he loued cheualrye
Trowth and honoure fredom and curtesye
Ful worthy he was in his lordes werre
And therto hadde he ryden, no man ferre
And as wele in cristendome as in hethenesse
And euir hadde honoure for his worthynesse
At alisaundre he was when it was wonne

Prologue

Fullle of te tyme he hadde the horde begonne
Abouen alle nations in price
In lettowe hadde he repsed and in Ruse
In garnade at the sege eke hadde he be
At algepiz and ryden in Belmarpe
At lepeys was he and eke at Satalpe
Whan they were wonne and in the grete see
At many a noble arme hadde he be
At mortayl bataillies hadde he be systene
And foughe for oure seyth at Trampssene
In listes thryes and ay sleyn his foo
This yke worthy knyght hadde he also
Som tyme with the lord of palathpe
Ageyn a nother hethen man in Tuzhpe
And euirmore he hadde a souerayn price
And though he was worthy he was wise
And of his sporte as meke as a mayde
He neuir yete no vilanye he said
In alle his lyf into no maner wyght
He was a very gentyl parfite knyght
For to telle you of his arzaie
His horse were gode but he was nat gape
Of fustian he were a gyppon
Alle he smered with his habergeon
For he was late come fro his bygge
And sent for to do his pilgramage

Prologue



With him there was his sonne a yong squire
A lout and a lusty bacheler
With lokes crulle as they were leyde in presse
Of twenty yere of age he was ygesse
Of his stature he was of euene lenght
And wonderfu delpyer and of grete strenght
And he hadde be somtyme in cheuanchye
In flaundes. in Artoyse and in pycardye
And borne him wele as of a lytel space
In hope to stonden in his ladies grace
Enbrowded was he as it were a mede
Alle fulle of fresshe floures white and rede
Sprynginge he was oz floyting alle the daie
He was as fresshe as is the moneth of may
Short was his gowne with sleuys long and wyde
Wele coude he sitte on hors and therto faire ryde
He coude songes make and wele endite
Gouste and daunce portraie and eke write

Prologue

So hote he loued that by nyghter tale
He slepte nomore than the nyghtingale
Curteis he was lowly and feruysable
He carst heforne his fadre at the table



a yeman hadde he and seruauntes nomo
At that tyme for he list to ryde soo
And he was cladde in cote and hode of grene
A sheef of pecok arowes bright and shene
Vndre his belt he bare ful thriftely
Wele coude he dresse his takys pomanly
His arowes drouped nat with fethers lowe
And in his hond he bare a mighty holwe
A not hede he hadde with a broune visage
Of wodemannescraft coude he alle the vsage
Vpon his arme he bare a gay bracer
And by his syde a suerde and a bokeler
And on that othez side a gay dagger
Barnesed wele and sharp as poynte of spere

Prologue

A cristofer on his brest of siluer shene
 An horne he baar the baldryph was of grene
 A foster was he sothly as I gesse



He was also a nonne a pricresse
 That of her smyling was symple and koy
 Her gretest othe was by seint koy
 And she was lepyd dame Eglentyne
 Full wele she for the service dyuine
 Entoynd in her boye a fulle semely
 And frenche she spake fulle fetously
 After the secke of stratford at the bowe
 For frenshe of Parice was to her vnknowe
 At mete wele taught was she with alle
 She lete no morsel fro her lippes falle
 Ne wette her syngers in her sauce depe
 Wele coude she carpe a morselle of mete
 That no drope fel bypon her brest

Prologue

In curteyssee was sette fulle meyl her lest
Her ouerlippe wiped she so cleene
That in her cuppe ther was no ferthing sene
Of grece. Whan she hadde dronke her draught
Fulle semely after her mete she raught
And schirly she was of grete disporte
Of plesaunce and ampyable of porte
And peyned her to countrefete there
Of courte and to be statey of manere
And to be holde digne of reuerence
But for to speke of her conscience
She was so cheritable and so pyteous
She wolde wepe if that she sawe a mouse
Raught in trappe if it were dede or bledde
Of smale houndes hadde she that she fedde
With roost flesshe or mylke or wastel brede
But sore wept she if any of theym were dede
Or if men smote theym with yerde smert
And alle was conscience and tendre herte
Fulle semely her wymmylpyched was
Her nose tretise her eyen grey as glas
Her mouth smal and therto soft and rede
But spherly she hadde a faire forehede
It was almost a spanne brode & trowe
For hardly she was nat bnder growe
Fulle fetyce was her cloke as & was waar
Of smalle coralle aboute her arme she bare
A peyre of bedes gauded alle with grene
And there on heng a broche fulle shene
On whiche first was writte a crowned A
And after that Amor vincit omnia
A nother nonne with her hath she
That was her chapeleyn and prests thre



A Monke ther was fayr for the maistre
 An oute ryder that loued wele benoysye
 A manly man to be an abbote able
 Fulle many a deynthe horse hadde he in stable
 And when he rode men myght his bridel here
 Gyngling and whyspyng in the winde clere
 And eke as lowde as doth the chapel belle
 There as this lord was kepaz of the celle
 The reule of seint Maure and of seint Benet
 Bicause he held it somwhat olde and streyte
 This ilke monke lete olde thinges pace
 And helde after the new worlde the space
 He pas nat of the texte a pulled henne
 That seyth that hunters be nat holy men
 Ne that a monke when he is rechelesse
 Is lyke to a fische when it is waterlesse
 This is to sey a monke oute of a cloystre

Prologue

But that tēte helde he nat worth an opstē
And I sey that his opunyon was gode
What shulde he studie and make him wode
Upon a boke alwey in clopstre to poure
Or swynke with his hondes and labour
As austyn biddeth how shulde the worlde be serued
Let austyn haue his swynke to him reserved
Therfore he was a prycafour a right
Grehoundes he hadde as swift as foule on flight
Of pryking and of huntynge for the hare
Was alle his lust for no cost wolde he spare
I sawe his sleues purfyled at the hōde
With grice and that the fynest of a londe
And to fasten his hōde hndre the chynne
He hadde of golde wrought a curpous pynne
A loue knotte in the gretter ende ther was
His hede was halled which shone as glas
And eke his face as he hadde been anoynte
He was a lord fatte and in gode poynte
His eyen steep and rolling in his hede
That stempd as a furney of alede
His botes solwpe his hors in grete estate
Nowe certeynly he was a fayre prlate
He was nat pale as a fourepynd goost
A fat swan loued he best of any roste
His palfrey was as broune as a berry

Prologue



frere thez was a wanton and a merey
A limptoure and a ful solemne man
In alle the ordres foure is none that can
Somoche of dalpauce and faire langage
He hadde made fulle many a faire mariatge
Of yong wymin at his owen cost
Unto his ordre he was a noble post
Fulle wel beloued and fulle famplier was he
With frankleyns ouer al in his contré
Ande he with worthy pemen of the towne
For he hadde powez of confessioun
And seid him self more than a curate
And of his ordre he was licencié
Fulie suetely herd he confession
And plesaunt with his absclucion
And an easy man to gyue penaunce
There he wiste to haue gode pitaunce

Prologye

For bnto a poure ordure for to gyue
Is signe that a man is wele y shryue
For if he pas he durst wele make a haunt
He wist that a man was repentaunt
Many a man so hard is of herte
He may nat wepe though he soze smerte
Therfore in steede of wepyng and praye
Men moste yue siluer to the poure freres
His tepat was y farsed ful of knyues
And with pynnes to gyue faire wyues
And certeyne he hadde a mery note
Meryly colde he syng and pley at the rote
Of pyddinges he bare vterly the price
His necke was white as the flour de luce
Therto stronge he was as a champpoun
And knewe the tauernes wele in euery towne
And euery osteler and tapstere
Better than a lazare or a beggestere
For bnto suche a worthy man as he
Accordeth nat as by his facultie
To haue of suche seke lazars acqeyntaunce
It is nat honest it may nat auaunce
For to dele with suche pozaillie
But with riche and sellers of bytaillie
And ouer alie there as richesse shulde aryse
Curteys he was and lowly of seruice
Ther was no man no where so vertuouse
He was the best beggar in his house
And gaue a certeyne ferme for the graunt
Noon of his brethern cam in his haunt
For though a widowe hadde nat a shoo
So plesaunt was his in principio
Yet wolde he haue a ferthing or he went

Prologue

His purchase was better than his rent
 And berke he colde as it were a whelpe
 In loue daies there coude he make helpe
 For there he was like a cropst ree
 With a threde bare ope as a poure frere
 But he was like a maister or a pope
 Of double worstede was his semy cope
 That rounde was as a bette oute of presse
 Som what he lisped for his wantowne
 To make his englishe swete spon his tonge
 And his harpyng when he hadde y sung
 His eyen went led in his hede a right
 As doon the sterres in the frosty nyght
 This worthy frere was called huberd



Marchant ther was with a forked berd
 In motley on his horse high he sat
 Upon his hede a flaunders beuer hat

Prologue

His hotes clasp'd feyre and fetously
 His reasons he spak ful solemnyly
 She wing alwey the encesse of his wyynyng
 He wolde the see were kepte for any thyng
 Betwyte Middelburgh and oze welke
 Welke colode he in his eschaunge selle
 This worthy man his witte ful wel be sette
 Ther wist no wight that he was in dette
 So statly he was of gouernaunce
 With his bargaynes and with his cheurfaunce
 For sothe he was a worthy man with alle
 But sothe to say I not how men him calle



a
 Clerke ther was of Wyenforde also
 That vnto logik had longe y go
 And lene was his horse as a rake
 And he was nat right fat I vndertake
 But looked holowe and ther to sobirly
 Ful thredebare was his ouerest courtly

For he hadde gotten him yet no benefice
 Ne was nat worldly to haue an office
 For he hadde leuyd to haue at his beddis hede
 Twenty bookes bound in white and rede
 Of aristotle and of his philosophie
 Than robes riche or fedyl or sawtre .
 But alle be that he was a philosophe
 yet hadde he but lytel golde in cofre
 But alle that he mighte of his frendes hene
 On bookes and on lernynge he it spent
 And besyde gan for the soules praye
 Of theym that pauen him wherwith to scolaye
 Of studie toke he moost cure and hede
 Nat a worde spake he more than nede
 And that was seyde in fourme and reuerence
 Shorte and quike and ful of high sentence
 Sowynge moral vertue was his speche
 And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche



Prologue

a Sergeaunt of la we waaz and wise
Was there that oft hadde be at the parwise
That was also fulle riche of excellence
Discrete he was and of grete reuerence
He semyd such his wordes were so wise
Justice he was ful ofte in assise
By patent and by playn comyssion
For his science and his high renoun
Of fees and robes had he many one
So grete a purchasour was there nowhere none
Al was fee symple to him in effecte
His purchace might nat be to him suspecte
Nowhere so besy a man as he ther nas
And yet he semed besyer than he was
In termes had he caas and domes alle
That fro the tyme of king William were falle
Therto he coude endite and make a thing
Ther coude no wight pynche at his writing
And every statute coude he pleyh by rote
He rode but homely in a myddel cote
y girthed with a seynt of sikke with barres smale
Of his aray telle I no lenger tale



Prologue

Frankleyn was in his companye
a white was his berd as is the deysie
And of his complexioun was sanguyn
Wele loued he by the morowe a cuppe of wyne
Tolpue in delite was euer his wone
For he was eppcuries owen sone
That held opunpon that playn delite
Was beray felicite pazfite
An house holder and that a grete was he
Seint Julian he was in his contre
His brede his ale was alwey after one
A better viued man was no where none
Withoute bake mete was he neuiz in house
His fishe his flesshe and that so plenteuous
It snewed in his house of mete and drinke
Of alle dentees that men coude thinke
After the sondry season of the yere
So chaunged he his mete and his soupere
Fulle many a fatte partriche hadde he in mewe
And many a breme and luce in stewe
Woo was his coke but his sawce were
Poynaunt and sharp and redy alle his yere
His table doormaunt in his halie alwey
Was redy couered alle the long daye
At sessions thez was he lord and sire
Fulle oft tyme he was knyght of the shire
A anlace and a gypseye al of silke
Ring at his girdel as white as morowe mylke
A sberene hadde he he and coronoure
Was nowhere suche a worthy banesoure



A Haberdasher thez was and a carpenters
 A webbe a dpez and a tappser
 And they were clothed alle in one spure
 Of a solempne and grete fraternyte
 Fulke freshe and new theiz gere pyked was
 Theire hynues chaped were nat with brasse
 But al with sikkez wrought fulle kene and wele
 Theiz girdeles and their pouches euery dyle
 Wele semed eche of theym a faire burtees
 To sitten in the yelde halle at the dese
 Eueriche for the wisdom that he can
 Was happely for to be an alderman
 For catel hadde they pnow and rent
 And theiz wyues wolde it wele assent
 And elles certeyn they were to blame
 It is fulle faire to be called Madame
 And go to the biggylles alle bifoze
 And haue a mantel rialy y boze



a Coke they hadde with theym for the nones
 To boyle the cheyns and the mary bones
 And poudre marchaunt tart and talingale
 Wese k:ne we he a draught of london ale
 He coude roost sethe broyle and frye
 Make mortre wes and wese bake a pye
 But grete harme was it as it thought me
 For on his shynne a mormale hadde he
 And blanke manger made he with the beste



a Shipman was there that woned far by west
 For ought I wote he was of dertmouth
 He rode upon a rolunce as he couth

In a gowne folding to the knee
 A dagger on a lace hanging hadde he
 A boute his necke vndre his arme a dolune
 The hote somez hadde made his hewe alle browne
 And certeynly he was a gode felawe
 Fulle many a draught of wyne he hadde draue
 Fro burdeuy warde while the chapman slepe
 Of nyce conscience toke he no kepe
 If that he faught and hadde the higher honde
 By water he sent theym home to euery londe
 But of his craft to rehen wele his tydes
 His stremes and his daungers him besides
 His herberuth his mone and his lodemanage
 There was none suche from hulle to Cartage
 Hardy he was and waaz to vndertake
 With many a tempest his bezde hath been shake

Prologue

He knew alle the hauenes that there were
 Fro gotelond vnto Capfenestre
 And euery crype in Britayn and in spayne
 His barge was called the Maudeleyne



With vs ther was a doctoure of phispe
 In the worlde was ther none him li he
 To speke of physike and surgery
 For he was grounde in astronampe
 He kept his pacient a grete dele
 In houres by magpye naturlie
 Wele coude he of fortune the ascendent
 Of his ymages for his pacient
 He knewe the cause of euery maladye
 Were it of colde hete moyst or drye
 And were engendred of what humoure
 He was a berry parfite practesoure
 The cause y knowe and of his harme the rote
 Anone he pas to the seke man his bote
 For redy alwey be his apotecaries

Prologue

To send him drugges and his lectuaries
For eche of theym made othez for to wyne
Theire frendeship was nat new to begynne
For wele knewe he the olde Esculapius
And discorpydes and eke Rufus
Olde pporas. haly. and eke Galiene
Serapion. Rasis. and eke Auicene
Auerroys damascene and constantyn
Bernarde Gatisden and Gilbertyn
Of his dyete mesurable was he
For it was of no superfluite
But of grete noysshing and degeestyble
His stodye was but lytel on the byke
In sangweyn and in perce y cladde with alle
Lyned with tassata and with sandalle
And lytelle he was of his dispence
He kept that he wan in the pestilence
For golde in physike is a cordialle
Therefore he loued golde in especalle



Prologue

a Gode wif thez was of besyde bathe
And she was some dele deef & that was scathe
Of clothe making hadde she suche an haunt
She passed theym of pyre and of gaunt
In alie the parisshe wif was there none
That to the offryngte biforn her shulde gone
And if thez dyd certeyn wrothe was she
Than was she oute o falle charyte
Her hercheues were fulle fyne of grounde
I durst swere they weyd thre ponde
That on sonday were on her hede
Her hosen were of fyne scarlet rede
Ful strepte y teryde and schoos ful moyst and new
Bolde was her face faire and rede of hewe
She was a worthy woman alle her lyue
Husbondes at the churche dore hadde she fyue
Withoute othez company in yowthe
But therof nedith nat to speke as nowthe
At acres hadde she been and at Iherusalem
She had passed through many a straunge reame
At Rome she hadde be and boloyne
At seynt James in Galis and at Coloyne
She coude moche of wandring in the wey
Gap tothed was she sothly to sey
Upon an ambusez ful easly she satte
y wyped wele and on her hede an hatte
As brode as it were a bohelz or a targe
A fote mantel aboute her hippez large
And on her heles a peire of spores sharpe
In felawship coude she la we and carpe
Of remedies of loue she coude par chaunce
For of that arte she coude the olde daunce

Prologyn



Gode man thez was of religion?
a And was a poure parson of a towne
But riche he was of holy thought and werke
He was also a lerned man a clerke
That cristes gospelles truly wolde preche
His parisschons deuoutly wolde he teche
Benygne he was and wondre diligent
And in aduersite fulle pacient
And suche he was proued ofte sithes
Fulle lothe were he to curse for his tithes
But rather wolde he yeue oute of doute
Vnto his poure parisschons aboute
Of his offryngte audeke of his substaunce
He wolde in lytel thinge haue suffisaunce
Wyde was his parysshe and houses fer a sondre
But he lete nat for rayne ne for thundre
In sekenesse nez in myschepf to visite
The ferrest in his parysshe more and lyte
Vpon his feete and in his honde a staf

Prologue

This noble ensample bnto his shepe he rane
That first he wrought and afterwarde he taught
Dute of the gospelle the wordes he caught
And this figure he ched therto
That if golde rust what shulde iron doo
For a preest to be foule in whom we truste
No wondre is a lewde man to ruste
And shame it is if a preest take hepe
A stotty shepeherd and a clene shepe
Wele ought a preest ensample to gyue
By his ciensse how his shepe shold lyue
Besette nat his benefice to hyre
And lete his shepe acombred in the myre
And ryne to london to seynt poules
And seke him a chauntrye for soules
O thez with a broderhode to be withholde
But dwellle at home and kepe his folde
So that the wolfe ne made it nat myscarpe
He was a shepeherde and nat a mercenarpe
And though he holy were and vertuons
He was nat to synfulmen to dispiteous
Ne of his teching daungerous ne digne
But in his speche discrete and benigne
To drawe folke to helpe with fairnesse
By gode ensample that was his besynesse
But it were any parson obstynate
Whether he were of high or lowe estate
Him wolde he synbbe sharply for the nones
A better preest I trowe nowhere none is
He wayted after no pompe ne reuerence
Ne made to him a spyced conscience
But cristes lore and his apostles tvefue
He taught but first he folowed him selue

Prologne



W^{ith} him ther was a plewe man his broder
That hadde led of dung many a fother
A trew swynke and a gode was he
Leuyng in pease and parfite charite
God loued he best with alle his hert
At alle tymes though he gamed or smert
And than his nyghboure right as him selue
He wolde thresshe and therto digge and delue
For cristes sake for euery poure wight
Withoute hyre if it ley in his myght
His tythes paide he faire and wele
Of his proper swynke and his catele
In a taberd he rode vpon a mere
There was also a reue and eke a millere
A sompnour and a pardonere also
A manciple and my selue there was no moo

Prologue



The myller was a stoute carle for the nones
Fulle byt he was of braun and bones
That proued wele for ouer alle there he cam
At wrastring alwey he wolde haue the ram
He was short shuldred brode a thicke quarre
There was no doze that he nolde heue of the barre
Or breke it at rennyng with his hede
His berd as any sorwe or foy was rede
And therto brode as it were a spade
Upon the cop right of his nose he hadde
A werte. and there on stode a tufte of heres
Rede as the brusteles of a solwes res
His nosetresses blake were and wide
A swerde and a bokeler bare he by his side
His mouth as grete was as a furnes
He was a jangler and a goliardys
And that was moost of synne and harlotries
Wele coude he stepe corne and tolle thries
And that he hadde a thombe of golde parde

Prologu

Manciple

A white cote and a blew hode wered he
A battge pyppre coude he blowe and sowne
And therwith he brought us oute of towne



a Gentyll manciple was ther of the temple
Of whiche a catoure might take exemple
For to be wise in bynyng of bitaille
For whether he paid or toke by taille
Algate he waited so on his achate
That he was ay bifoze and in gode state
Nowe is nat that of god a faire grace
That suche a lewed mannes witte shal be pace
The wisdom of an hepe of lernyd men
Of maisters hadde he mo thanne thries ten
That were of lawe experte and corions
Of whiche there were a dosen in that house
Worthy to be stewardestes of rent and sonde
Of any lord that is in Englonde
To make him lyue by his owen good
In honoure deties but he were wode

Prologue

Wherbyne scarcely as theym liste desire
And able for to helpe alle the shire
In any cause that might falle or happe
And yet this manciple set alle their cappe



¶ Here ther was a slendre colerike man
His herde is shawe as nygh as he can
His heres were by his eres rounde y shore
His top was docted like a preest bifore
Fulle leng were his legges and fulle lene
By hea staf ther is no calf y sene
Wele coude he kepe a garnez and a bynne
Ther was none auditoure coude of him wyne
Wele wist he by the drought and by the rayn
The yelding of his sede and of his greyn
His lordes shepe his nete and his deppe
His swyne his horse his store and his pultre
Was holk in this reys gouernynge
And by his couenaunt paue the rehnyng

Prologyn

Sith hislorde was twenty yere of age
Ther coude no man bringe him in a rage
There nas baillie ne none othez hyne
That he ne knewe his sight of his couyne
They weze of him a drad as of the deth
His wonyng was ful faire spon a heth
With grene trees shadowed was his place
He coude better than hislorde purchase
Fulliche riche he was astored pryuey
His lord wele coude he please subtelly
To yene and lene to him of his own good
And haue thanke and yete a cote and a hode
In youth he hadde lernyd a good mystere
He was a were gode wright a Carpentere
This reue sat spon a wele gode stot
That was a spomelgrey and hight scot
A long surcote of perce spon him he hadde
And by his side he bare a rusty bladde
Of norfoke was this reue of which I telle
Beside a towne men calle Bladswelle
Tucked he was as is a frere aboute
And euiz he rode the hyndrest of the route



Prologue

a Somnoure with he was in that place
That hadde a fyre rede cherubyns face
For sasseme he was with eyen narrow
Note he was and likerous as a sparow
With black browes shalced and pilled berd
Of his bisage children were a ferd
Ther nas quylsilnez litarge ne brymstone
Norace ceruse ne oyle of tartre none
Ne opnement that wolde clense ne bite
That him might helpe of his welkes white
Ne of his knobbes sitting on his chekes
Wile loued he opnons garleke and likes
And for to drinke strong wyne as rede as blode
Than wolde he speke and cry as he were wood
And when he hadde wele dzonke the wyne
Than wolde he speke no worde but latyn
A fewe termes hadde he two or thre
That he hadde lernyd of sum man of decre
No wondre is he herde it alle the daye
And eke ye knc wele that a Jap
Can clepe watte as wele as can the pope
But who coude him in othir thinges grope
Than hadde he spent alle his philopsey
Ay questio quid queris wolde he cry
He was a gentyll harlote and kynde
A better felaw sholde men nat fynde
He wolde suffre for a quarte of wyn
A gode felowe to haue his concubyn
A twelf moneth and excuse him at the fulle
Fulle pryuely a fynche eke coude he pulle
And if he fonde owhere a good felawe
He wolde teche him anon to haue a we
In suche caas of the archedebyns curse

Prologue

But if mannes soule were in his purse
 For in his purse he sholde punysshed be
 Purse is the archdehenes helle saide he
 But were I woote he lied right in dede
 Of cursyng outht eche man to drede
 For cursyng wille sle right as soylyng saueth
 And also ware him of a significauit
 In daunger hadde he at his owne guyse
 Alle the ponyng tyrles of the diocysse
 And knewe of theire counseyl and was of theire rede
 A garlonde he hadde sette vpon his hede
 As grete as it were an ale stake
 A bokelez hadde he made him of a cake



yth theym there rode a gentil pardone
 Of rounquale his frende and his compere
 That streight was come fro the courte of Rome
 Fulle lowde he song come hyther lone to me
 This sompnoire bare to him a styf burdoun
 Was neuiz trompe of half so grete a sowne

Prologue

This pardoner had here as yelow as wey
And smoth it heng as doth a stryke of fley
By hounses heng his lockes that he hadde
And therewith his shulders ouer spradde
But than it ley by culpons one and oon
An hode for joynte wered he none
For it was trussed vpon his walette
Him thought he rode vpon a new get
Disshewyd saue his cappe he rode alle bare
Suche glaryng eyen had he as hath an hare
A bernacle hadde he solwed vpon his cappe
His walet biforne him hadde he in his lappe
Brette fulle of pardon come fro Rome alle hote
A boyce he hadde as smalle as hath a gote
No herde hadde he ne neuiz shuld haue
As smoth was it as it were new shawe
I trowe he were a gelding or a mare
But of his craft from Berwyke vnto Ware
He was ther nowhere suche a pardoner
For in his male he hadde a pylowe beer
Which that he seyd was oure ladyes beyle
He said he hadde a gobbet of the seyle
That seynt Petyr hadde whan that he went
Vpon the see tyl Iesus crist him bent
He hadde a crosse of laton fulle of stones
And in a glasse he hadde pigges bones
But with these reliques whan that he fonde
A poure parson duelling vpon londe
Vpon a daye he gat him more money
Than the parson gat in monethes tway
And thus hadde he flateries and iapes
He made the parson and the peple his apes
But truly to telle at the last

Prologue

He was in chirche a noble eccle siafte
Wele coude he rede a lesson or a storpe
But altherbest he songe an offretorpe
For wele he wist whan that songe was sunge
He must preche and fyle a while his tunge
To wynne siluer as he fulle wele coude
Therfore he songe the merierly and loude

n Ow haue I tolde you shortly in a cause
The state the arzaie the nombre & the cause
Why that assembled was this company

In Southwerke at the gentil hosterpe
That hight the Taberde fast by the belle
But now is tyme to you for to telle
How that we bare vs that ilke nyght
When that we were in the hostry a light
And after wille I telle of oure diage
And alle the remenaunt of oure pilgramage
But first I you pray of pouz curtesye
That ye arette nat my vilonye
Though that I playnly speke in this matere
To telle you thei wordes and theire chere
And though I speke theire wordes propriety
For this ye knowe as wele as I
Who shal a tale telle after a man
He must reherse as nere as he can
Euery worde if it be in his charge
Al speke he neuiz so rudely and so large
Or elles he must telle his tale vntrewe
Or sey thinges or feyne wordes newe
He may nat spare although he were his broder
He moot as wele say o worde as a nother
Trist spake him selue ful brode in hofy writte
And wele ye wote no vilany is it

Prologue

The plato sepeþ who can it rede
The worde must be cosyn to the dede
Also I praye you forpeue it me
Al though I set nat folk in theire degre
Here in these tales as they shulde stonde
My witte is shorte ye may wele vndrestonde



Reke were made oure ost to vs euerichone
And to the soupere sette he vs anone
He seruyd vs with vitaylle at the best
Stronge was the wyne and wele drinke vs lyst
A semery man oure ost was with alle
For to be a marshall in a lordes halfe
A large man he was with eyn stepe
A feyrez brugges is ther none in chepe
Bolde of his speche and wele was y taught
And of manhode lacked he right naught
The therto was he right a mery man
And after souper to pleyne he began
And spake of mirth amonge othez thinges

Prologue

Whan that we hadde made oure rehnynges
He sayd thus fordynge trulpy
ye be to me right welcom hertly
For by my trewth if I shalle nat lye
I saw nat this yere so mery a company
At onys in this herborow as now
feyne wolde I do you myrth if I wist how
And of a myrth I am right now be thought
To do you ease and it shal cost you nought
ye go to Taunterbury warde god you spede
The blisful martyr quyte you your mede
And wele ye wote as ye go by the wey
ye shapyn you to take and to pley
For trulpy comfort ne myrth is none
To ryde by the wey dombe as a stone
And therfore wille I make you disporte
As I said erst and do you comforte
And it lyketh you alle by one assent
For to stonde at my iugement
And for to wyrke as I shalle you say
To morow whan ye ryden on the way
Now by my fadre soule that is dede
But ye be mery I shal geue you my hede
Holde by your hond withoute more speche
Dure counsel shal nat long be to seche
As thought it was nat worth to make vs wys
And graunted him withoute more a bys
And badde him sey his berdite as him list
Lordinges quod he now herketh for the best
But take it nat I praye you in disdeyn
This is the poynthe to speke it shdte and pley
That eche of you to shorte with your wey
In this viage shal tel tales & wey

Prologue

To Caunterbury warde I mene it so
And homwarde he shal telle othez tales two
Of auentures that whilom haue befallē
And whiche of you berith him best of alle
That is to say that tellith in this caas
Tales of the best sentence and moost solace
Shalie haue a souper of our alther cost
Here in this place sittynge by the post
Whan that we com aȝen from Caunterbury
And for to make you the more mery
I wille my sekue godely with you ryde
Right at myn owen cost and be your gyde
And who that wol my iugement with say
Shortely shal paye alle that is spent by the wey
And if he bouchsauf that it be so
Telme anone withoute wordes mo
And I wille arly shape me therfore
This thing was graunted and othes swore
With ful glad herte and preȝen him also
That he wolde bouchsauf that it be so
And that he wolde be our gouernour
And of our tales iuge and reportour
And sette a souper at a certeyn pryce
And wolde be ruled at his deuyce
High and lowe and alle by one assent
We be accorded to this iugement
And ther vpon the wyne was sette anone
We dranke and to rest went we echone
With oute any lenger taryng
A morowe when the day gan spring
Up rose our hoost and was alle our coh
And gadred vs to gidre alle in a flok
And forth we ryden litel more than paas

Prologue

Unto the watering of sent Thomas
And there our host gan his horse arrest
And said herkeneth lordings if ye list
ye woot oure forwarde and I you recorde
yf euynsong and morosonge accorde
Let se now who shal telle the first tale
As eniz mot I drinke wyne or ale
Who so wil be rebelle to my iugement
Shal pay for alle that is by the wey spent

n We draw cut or that ye furth er twynne
 Whiche shal the first tale begynne

 Spz knyght quod he my master and my sorde
Now draw with cut for that is myn accorde
Cometh hether quod he my lady prioressse
And ye Spz clerke let by your shamefastnes
Ne studie nat. ley on hand euery man
Anone to drawen euery wight began
And shortly to telle as it was
Were it by auenture fortune or caas
The sothe is this. the cut fyl on the knyghte
Of whiche fulle blith and glade is euery wight
And telle he must as it was reson
By for ward and by composition
As ye haue herde what nedith wordes mo
And whan this gode man sa we that it was so
As he that was wise and obedient
To kepe his for ward by his fre assent
He saide sithnes I shal begynne the game
What welcom be cut in goddes name
Now let vs ryde and herken what I say
And with that worde we riden furth our wey
And he began with a right mery chere
And seydanone his tale as ye shalle here.

The knyghtes Tale

Here begynneth the knyghtes tale



Whilom as olde stozpes tellith vs
W Ther was a duke hight Theseus
Of Thebes he was lorde and gouernour
And in his tyme suche a conquerour
That greter was ther none vndre the sonne
Fulke many a riche contre hadde he wonne
That with his wisdom and cheualry
He conquered alle the regne of femeny
That whilom was cleped Cithea
And wedded the quene ypolita
And brought her home in his contre
With moche glorie and solennyte
And eke her yong suster Emely
And thus with victory and melody
Let I this worthy duke to athenes ryde
And alle his hoost in harneys him be side
And certes if it nere to long to here

The knyghtes Tale

I wolde haue tolde fully the matere
How wonne was the regne of femyne
By theseus and by his cheualry
And of the grette batailles for the nones
Betwix Athenes and amasones
And how besegged was ypolita
The faire hardy quene of Cithea
And of the fest that was at her wedding
And of the tempest at her home comyng
But alle that thyng I moot as now forbere
I haue god wote a large felde to ere
And weke been the oxe in my plow
The remenaunt of my tale is long ynow
I wil nat let eke none of this route
Let every felow telle his tale aboute
And let se now who shalle the souper wyne
And there I lete I wille agayn begynne

His duke of whom I make mencion
t When he was come almost to the town
In al his welthe and his moost pryde
He was ware as he cast his eye a syde
Where that there knoked in the hight wey
A company of ladies twey and twey
Eche after othe cladde in clothes blake
But suche a crye and suche a wo they make
That in this world nys creature spurnyng
That herde suche an othe weymentyng
And of this cry they nolde neuiz stentyng
Tyl they the reynes of his bridel bentyn
What folke be ye that at myn home comyng
Perturben so my fest with cryyng
Quod Theseus. haue ye so grette enuie
Of myn honour that thus complayn and crye

The knyghtes tale

Oz who hath you mysboden oz offended
And tel me if it may be amended
And why that ye be clothed thus in Blake
The oldest lady of them alle spake
Whan she had swoned with a dedely chere
That it was rewlth to se and to here
She sayd lorde to whom fortune hath yene
Victory. and as a conquerour to spue
Nought greueth vs your glory and your honour
But we beseeke you of mercy and socour
Haue mercy on our woo and distresse
Som droppe of pite thrugh thy gentillesse
Upon vs wretched women let now falle
For certes lorde ther is none of vs alle
That she ne hath been duchesse oz a quene
Now be we captiffes as it is wele sene
Thanked be fortune and her fals whele
That none estate ensureth to be wele
Now certes lorde to abide your presence
Here in this temple of the goddesse clemence
We haue be wayting alle this fourtyght
Now help vs lord sith it lieth in thy might
Wreche which that wepe and wayle thus
i Whilom wif to king Campanus
That starft at thebes a cursed be that day
And alle we than beryn in this araye
And make alle this lamentacion
We losten alle our husbondes at that toun
Whiles that the sette there aboute lay
And yet now the clde creon wela way
That lord is now of Thebes that cite
Fulfilled of ire and iniquite
He for despite and for his tiranny

The knyghtes tale

To doon the ded bodies bilony
Of alle our lordes which that been slawe
Hath alle the bodies on an hepe y drawe
And wol nat suffre theym by none assent
Nether to be buryed ne to be brent
But makith houndes to ete them in dispite
And with that worde with oute more respite
They fallen groueling and cry pitcousty
Haue on vs wrechid women som mercy
And let our sorow synke in thy herte
This gentil duke of his counseil stert
With hert pitous whenne he herde them speke
Him thought his hert wolde breke
When he sawe them so pitous and so mate
That whilom were of so grete estate
And in his armes he them alle byhent
And them conforteth in fulle gode entent
And swore his othe as he was trew knight
He wolde do so ferforth his might
Upon the tyraunt creon him to wreke
That alle the peple of grece shuld speke
How Creon was of the seus y serued
As he that hath his deeth wile deserued
And right anone withouten more abode
His baner he displaied and forth he rode
To the bes warde and alle his oost besyde
No neer athenes nolde he go ne ryde
Ne take his ease nat fully half a day
But on his wey that nyght he lay
And sent anone ypolita the quene
And smely her yong sustre sbene
Vnto the toun of athenes to duelle
And forth he rydeth ther is no more to telle

The knyghtes tale

He rede statue of mars With spere and targe
t So shyneth in his white baner large
That alie the feldees glittren by and doun
And by his baner boyn is his penon
Of golde fulle riche in which thez was y bete
The mynutaure which he wan in crete
Thus rideth this duke this conquerour
And in his oste of cheualrye the floure
Til that he cam to Thebes and a sight
faire in a feld there as he thought to fight
But shortly for to speke of this thing
With creon which he was of thebes kyng
He faught. and sla w him manly as a knyght
In playn bataille and put his folke to flight
And at a salte he wan the cite after
And rent a doun walles sparre and rafter
And to the ladies he restored ageyn
The bodis of thei2 husbondes that wer slayn
To do obseques as tho was the gypse
But it were alie to longe for to deuise
The grete clamour and the wrymenting
That the ladies made atte brennyng
Of the bodis. and the grete honour
That Theseus the noble conquerour
Doth to the ladies when they from him went
But shortly for to telle is myn entent
When that this worthy duke this Theseus
Hath creon slayne and wan thebes thus
Styl in the felde he toke al night his rest
And did with alle the contre as him list
He ransaked in the taas of bodis dede
Thermy for to stripe of harneys and of wede
The pylours dyde thei2 besynesse and cure

The knyghtes tale

after the bataylle and the discomfiture
And so bespyle that in that caas they sonde
Throw gyrt with many a greuous wounde
Two yong knyghtes ryng by and by
Bothe in one harneys wrought fulle richely
Of whiche two Arcite hight that one
And the othez knyght heght Palamon
Nat fully quiche ne fully dede they were
But by thei cote armure and thei gere
The herodes knew theym best in specialle
As that they were of the blode royal
Of thebes and of Sustryn two y bore
Dute of the taas the pylours haue theym toze
And haue theym caried soft into the tent
Of the seus. and he fulie sone theym sent
To Athenes to dwellle there in pryson
Perpetuelie for he nolde no raunson
And when this worthy duke hadde thus doon
He toke his hoost and home he gothe anone
With laurez crowned as a conqueroure
And there he lyueth in Joye and in honoure
Terme of his lyf what nedith wordes moo
And in a toure in anguysshe and with woo
Dwellith palamon and his felaw arcite
For euizmore thez may no golde theym quyte
Bus passed yere by yere and day by day
Tyl it fel ones in a mornynge of May
That Emely that fairez was to seen
Than is the hely bpon the stalke grene
And fressher than may with floures newe
For with the rose coloure stroue hez he w
I not which was the fairez of theym two
Ez it was day as was hez wonte to do

The knyghtes tale

She was a ryse and alle redy dyght
For may wol haue no slottarde a nyght
The season prichith euery gentil bert
And makith him oute of his stepe to stert
And sayeth a ryse and dothyn obseruaunces
This makith Emely to haue remembraunces
To do honour to may and for to ryse
p clothed fresshe was she to deuyse
Her pelow here was broyded on a tresse
Behinde her bahe along yerd I gesse
And in the gardyn at the son spriste
She walked by and down and as her liste
She gadred floures part white and rede
To make a subtel chapelet for her hede
And as an aungel heuyng she song
The grete toure that was so thicke and stronge
Whiche of the castel was the chief dungeon
There as the knyghtes were in pryson
Of whiche I tolde you and telle shalle
Was eyn iopnaut to the gardyn walke
There as this Emely hadde her pleinyng
Bright was the sonne and clere that mornynge
And palamon this wofulle prysonez
As was his wone by leue of his gayler
Was ryse and rowmeth in the chambre on high
In whiche alle the noble cyte he seith
And eke the gardyn ful of braunches grene
There as this fresshe Emely the shene
Was in her walk and romed by and downe
This sorowfulle prysonez this palamon
Both in the chambre rowmpng to and fro
And to him selue compleyned of his woo
That he was borne fulle ofte he seyde alas

The knyghtes tale

And so besyl by a uenture and caas
That through a Wyndow of many a barre
Of iron grete and square as any sparre
He cast his eyen vpon Emelya
And therewith he blent and cryed ag
As though he were stongen to the hert
And with that cry arcite anone by stert
And saide to syn myne what alyth the
That art so pale and dedly on to see
Why criest thou who hath do the offence
For goddes loue take alle in pacience
Dure pryson. for it may non other be
Fortune hath yene vs this aduersite
Or elles som wiked aspecte or disposition
Of saturne. By som constellation
Hath yene vs this al though we had sworn
So stode the heuyn whan we were born
We must endure this is the shorte and pleyne
This palamon answerd and seid a geyne
To syn forsoth of this opunyon
Thou hast a beyn ymaginacion
This pryson causeth me nat to crye
But I was hurt now through myn eye
Vnto my hert that wol my bane be
The fairnesse of a lady that I se
pondre in the gardeyn rolmyng to and fro
Because of my cryng and my woo
I not whether she be woman or goddesse
But vennis it is sothley as I gesse
And therewith alle on knees down he fylle
And said venus if it be thy wille
you in this gardeyn thus to transfigure
Bifore me forowfulle wreche thy creature

The knyghtes tale

Dute of this pryson helpe that we may shape
And if it be oure destynye so be shape
By eterne worde to dye in pryson
Of oure signage haue som compassion
That is so lowe y brought by tyrannye
And with that worde Arcyte can espye
Where as the lady went to and froo
And with that sight her beaute hurte him so
That if palamon were wounded soze
Arcyte is hurt a smoch or more
And with a sygh he sayde piteously
The freshe beaute me sleeth sodenly
Of her that rolmeth in yondre place
And but I haue her mercy and her grace
That I may see her at the leste wey
I nam but dede there is no more to sepe

His palamon when he these wordes herde
t Dispiteously he loketh and aunswerd
Whether saist thou this in earnest or in pleye
Nay quod arcyte in earnest by my say
God helpe me so I lust ful litel to pleye
This palamon gan knytte his browes t wey
It were quod he to the no grete honoure
For to be fals ne for to be a traytoure
To me that am thy cosyn and thy brother
y sworne fuldepe and eche of vs to other
That neuiz for to dven in the peyn
Tyl that the deth departe shallic vs t weyn
Neyther of vs in lone to byndre other
Ne in non other case my leue brother
And that thou shuldest furthet me
In euery case as I shulde furthet the
This was thyn othe and myne certeyn

The knyghtes Tale

I wote it wele thou darst it nat withsaien
Thus art thou of my counseil withoute doute
And now thou woldest falsely be aboute
To loue my lady whom I loue and serue
And euz shalle tilke that myn herte sterne
Now certes fals arcite thou shalt nat so
I loued her first and tolde the my wo
As to my counsel and to my brothez sworn
To further me as I haue torde biforn
For which thou art bounden as a knyght
To helpe me if it lay in thy myght
Or elles art thou fals I dar wele seyn
This arcite fulle proudeky spake ageyn
Thou shalt quod he be rather fals than I
But thou art fals I tilke the vtterky
For paramour I loued her first ez thou
What wilt thou seyn thou wifest nat yet now
Whether she be a woman or a goddesse
Thyn is affection of holynesse
And myn is loue as to a creature
For which I tolde the myn auenture
As to my cosyn and my brothez sworn
I suppose thou loudest her biforn
Wotest thou nat wele the olde clerkes sawe
That who shal gyue a loue any law
Loue is a greter lawe by my panne
Than may be gene of any erthly man
And therfore positif law and suche decre
Is broken alday for loue in eche degre
A man must nedes loue magre his hede
He may nat fle it though he shuld be dede
Al be she mayde widow or wif
And eke it is nat likely al thy lyf

The knyghtes Tale

That haste the sight of her and I thabſence
For poſſible it is ſithnes thou haſt her preſence
And art a knyght a worthy man and able
That by ſom caas ſith fortune is chaungeable
Thou mayſt ſomtyme to thy deſyre atteyne
But I that am exiled and batzen
Of alie grace and ſo in grete diſpeyr
That there nys water erth fyre ne eyre
Ne creature that of them maketh is
That may ne heale or do comfort in this
Wele ought I ſterue in wanhope and diſtreſſe
fare wele my lif my luſt and my gladneſſe
Alas why playnen men ſo in comune
On purueaunce of god or of fortune
That prueeth them ofte in many wiſe
Wele better than them ſelf can deuſe
Som men deſire to haue richeſſe
That cauſe is of grete ſekeneſſe
And ſom man wolde oute of his pryſon ſayne
That in his houſe of his meyne is ſlayn
Infinite harmes be in this matere
We woot nat what thing we pray here
We faren as he that dronke is as a mouſe
A dronken man wote wele he hath an houſe
But he woot nat whiche is the right wey thider
And to a dronken man the wey is ſlider
And certes in this worlde ſo fare we
We ſeken faſt after felicitye
But we go wrong ful ofte truſy
Thus may we ſey alle. and namely I
That wende haue hadde a grete opunyon
That and I myght ſcape oute of pryſon
Than hadde I be in ioye and parſite hele

The knyghtes Tale

There now I am exiled fro myn wele
Sithnes I may nat se you & myl
I ne am but dede ther is no remedy
Upon that othez syde Palamon
Whan that he wist Arcite was gone
Suche sorow he maketh that the grette tour
Resounded of his pelling and clamour
The pure fetters on his shynne & grette
Were of his byttere salt teres wete
Allas quod he Arcite cosyn myne
Of alle oure stryf god woot the frute is thyne
Thou warkest now in thebes at thy large
And of my wo thou yuest litelle charge
Thou mayst say thou hast wisdom and manhede
Assemble alle the folke of oure kynrede
And make warre so sharpe in this countre
That by som auenture or by som tretie
Thou maist haue her to lady and to wif
For whom I must uedeske my lyf
For as by wey of possibilite
Sithnes thou art at large of pryson free
And art a lord grette in this auantage
More than is myn that sterue here in a cage
For I may wepe and weyl whyles I lyue
With alle the woo that pryson may me yue
And eke with the peyne that loue me yueth also
That doublith alle my tourment and my woo
Therwith the fyre of jelousye bystert
Within his brest and hent him by the herte
So wodely that he likly was to beholde
The boy tre or a ssen dede or colde
That sayde o cruel goddesse that gouerne
The worlde with bynding of your woode etern

The knyghtes Tale

And writen in the table of the athamant
your parlement and your etern grant
What is mankynde more bnto you hold
Than is the shepe that rouketh in the fold
For slayn is man right as an othe best
And duellith eke in prysoun and in arrest
And hath seknesse and grete aduersite
And ofte tyme gyltes payde
What gouernail is in this prescience
That gyltes turmentith Innocence
And yet encresith this alle my penaunce
That man is bounde to his obseruaunce
For goddes sake to lettyng of his wille
There as a best may alle his lust fulfille
And whan a best is dede he hath no pryn
And after his deth man may wepe and pleyne
Though in this worlde he haue care and woo
Withoute doute it may stonde so
The aunswere of this let I to deuyne
But wile I woot in this world gret pyne is
Allas I se a serpent or a theif
That many a true man hath do myschief
Gone at his large and where him list may turne
Bnt I must be in prysoun through saturne
And through him unhapp and eke wood
That hath destroyed were nygh alle the blode
Of thebes. With his wast walles wide
And venus sleeth me in that othe side
For jelousye and fere of him arcite
Now wol I stint of palamon alyte
And let him in his prysoun stilce duelle
And of Arcite forth I wolde you telle
The some passed the nyghtes wayenlong

The knyghtes Tale

Encrefith he double wise the peynes strong
Bothe of the louez and of the prysonez
I ne woot who hath the wofuller myster
For shortly to say this palamon
Perpetually is dampned to prysoun
In cheynes and in feters to be dede
And Arcite is exiled on his hide
For euermore as oute of that countre
For neuermore shal he his lady see
you louers aske I now this question
Who hath the worse of Arcite or Palamon
That one may se his lady day by day
But in prysoun must he dwelle alwey
That othez where him lyst may ryde or go
But se his lady shalle he neuermore
Now demeth as ye list ye that can
For I wille telle forth as I began
Whan that Arcite to the bescome was
ful ofte alday he swelt and sayd alas
For se his lady shal he neuermore
And shortly to conclud alle his woo
So moche sorow he hath creature
That is or shal be while the worlde may dure
His slepe his mete his drinke is him berast
That lene he way and drye as is a shaft
His eyen hollow and grisle to behorde
His hew felaw and pale as asshen colde
And solitary he was and euermore allone
And wayling al the nyght making his mone
And if he herd song or instrument
Than wolde he wepe he myght nat stent
So feble were his spirites and so low
And chaunged so that no man coude know

The knyghtes Tale

His speche ne his voyce though men it herde
As in his gyre for alie the worlde it ferde
Noght only lyke thre louers malady
Of hereos but rather like to many
Engendred of humou2 malancoslike
Besorn in his celle fantastike
And shortly turne d by so doun
Both habite and disposicioun
Of him this woful loue2 dan Arcite
What sholde I of his wo alday endite
Whan he endured hadde a pere oz two
This cruel turment this peyne and woo
At Thebes in his countre as I sayde
Upon a nyght in slepe as he him layde
Him thought how that wynged Mercury
Bisorn him stode and badde him be mery
His slepp per d he baaz in honde by right
An hat he were d byon his heres bright
Arayed was this god as he toke kepe
As he was whan argus toke his shepe
And sayd him thus to Athenes thou shalt wende
There is the shape of thy woo an ende
And with that worde Arcite awoke and stert
Now truly how sore that me smert
Quod he to Athenes wil I fare
Ne for no drede of deth shal I spare
To se my lady that I loue and serue
In her presence reche I nat to sterue
And with that worde he caught a myrou2
And saw that chaunged was his colou2
And saw his bisage in a nother hynde
And right anone it ran him in his mynde
That sithen his face was so diffigured

The knyghtes Tale

Of malady the whiche he hadde endured
He myght wele if that he bare him low
Lyue in athenes euirmore vnknow
And se his lady wele nygh day be day
And right anone he chaunged his aray
And cladde him in a poure labourez
And alone saue only a poure squyer
That knew his pruyte and alle his caas
Whiche was disguised pourly as he was
To athenes is he gone the next way
And to the courte he went vpon a day
And at the gate he profered his seruice
To drugg and to drawe & what men wolde deuyse
And shortly of this matere for to seyn
He fil in office toward a chamberleyn
The whiche that was duelling with Emely
For he was wise and wele coude a spye
Of euery seruaunt whiche that serued there
Wele coude he he wode and water here
For he was yong and mighty for the nones
And therto he was strong and big of bones
To do that ony wight him coude deuyse
A yere or two he was in this seruice
Page in the chambre of Emely the bright
And philostrate he seyde that he hight
But half so wele a loued man as he
Ne was there none in courte of his degre
He was so gentyl of condicioun
That throughe alle the courte of his renoun
They sayde that it were grete charyte
That Theseus wolde enhaunse his degre
And put him in a worshipful sernice
There that he myght his vertue exercise

The knyghtes tale

And thus within a while his name sprong
Both of his dedes and of his gode tong
That Theseus hath take him so nere
That of his chambre he made him a squere
And yave him golde to mayntene his degre
And eke men brought him oute of his countre
fro yere to yere ful pryncely his rent
But honestly and slightly he it spent
That no man wondred how that he it hadde
And thre yere in this wise his lif he ladde
And bare him in pease and eke in werre
There was no man that Theseus hadde derre
And in this blisse lete I now arcite
a. And speke I will of Palamon a lite
In derknesse horrible and strong pryson
This seyn yere hath sete this Palamon
for ynned what for woo and distresse
who felith double woo and heynesse
But Palamon that loue distreyneþ soo
And wode oute of his witte he goth for woo
And eke therto he is a prysoner
Parpetuallie and nat only for a yere
who coude ryme in englysshe propirly
His martirdome forsoth it am nat I
Therefore I passe as lightly as I may
It fyl in that seynth yere in may
The thridde nyght as olde bokes sayn
That alle this stoz tellen more playn
were it by auenture or destyne
As that whan a thing is shapen it shal be
That sone after the midnyght Palamon
By helpe of a frende broke hath his pryson
And fleeth the cite as sone as he may go

The knyghtes Tale

for he hadde yeuē his gayler drinke so
Of a clarzey made of a certayne wyne
with nercotises and oppe of thebes fyne
That alle nyght though men wolde him shake
The gayler so slepte he nyght nat a wake
And thus he fleeth as fast as he may
The nyght was shorte and fast by the day
That nedes cost he must him selue hyde
And to a groue fast there beside
With dredeful fote than stalkith palamon
for shortly this was his opunyon
That in that groue he wolde him hide alday
And in the nyght than wolde he take his wey
To thebes warde his frendes for to prey
On Theseus to helpe him to werzey
And shortly eyther he wolde lese his lyf
Or wyne faire Emely to his wif
This is the effecte and the entent playne
Now wol I turne to Arcite agayn
That lytel wist how nygh was his care
Tyl that fortune hadde brought him in the snare
The mery larke messanger of day
Salueth in her song the morow gray
And firy phebus riseth by so bright
That alle the orient laughith of that sight
And with the streames drieth the greues
The siluez droppes hanging on the leues
And Arcite that in the courte ryalle
With theseus his squyer principalle
Is rysen and loketh on the mery day
And for to do his obseruaunce to may
Remembring on the poynte of his desire
He on his cousez stariling as the fyre

The knyghtes tale

As ryden to the felde him to pley
Dute of the courte were it a myle or twey
And to the groue of whiche that I you tolde
By auenture his wey he can to holde
To make him a garlond of the greues
Were it of wodebinde or of hauthorn leues
And loude he song ayenst the sonne shene
May with alle thy floures and thy grene
Welcom be thou fresshe faire may
In hope that I som grene get may
And fro his courser with a lusty herte
Into the groue ful hastely he sterre
And in a pathe he rolmed bp and doun
There as by auenture this Palamon
Was in a busshe that noman might him se
For soze a ferde of his deth was he
No thing knew he that this was Arcite
God wote he wolde haue trowed it fulle lye
But soth is sayd go sithen many yeres
That feld hath eyen and wode hath eres
It is fulle faire a man to bere him cup
For alday men mete at vnset steup
For litel went Arcite of his fela we
That was so nygh to herkyne alle his saw
Whan that Arcite hadde rolmed al his fille
Palamon in the busshe now sitteth stille
And Arcite song alle the roundel lustily
Into a studie he fel sodenly
As doon these louers in thei quente yeres
Now in the crop and now in the breres
Now bp now doun as bohet in a well
Ryght as the fryday sothly for to telle
Now it shyneth now it reyneth fast

The knyghtes Tale

Right so can guerry Venus ouer cast
The hertes of her folke right as her day
Is gueriful. right so chaunged she aray
Selden is the fryday alle the woke like
Whan that arcite hadde songe he gan to like
And he set him down withoute any more
Alas quod he the day that I was bore
How long Juno through thy cruckte
Wilt thou werien the bes the cyte
Alas y brought is to confusion
The biode ryalte of Cadme and Amphion
Of Cadmus whiche was the first man
That Thebes bilte or first the toun began
And of the cyte first was crowned king
Of his lynage am I and of his offspring
By verray lyne as of the stoke ryalte
And now I am so haptif and so thralle
That he that is my mortalle enemy
I serue him and am his squier pauerly
And yet doth me Juno wele more shame
For I dare nat be knowe myn owen name
But there as I wonte was to hight Arcite
Now hight I philostrate nat worth a myte
Alas thou fel mars alias thou Juno
Thus pouz ire hath our lynage al fordo
Saue only me and wrechid palamon
That Theseus martreth in pryson
And ouer alie thus to sle me vterly
Loue hath his fyrre darte so brennyngly
It strykethe through my true careful herte
That shapen was erst my deth than my sherte
ye sie me with pouz eyen Emely
ye be the cause wherfore that I dye

The knyghtes tale

Of alle the remenaunt of myn othez care
He sette I nat the mountance of a tare
So that I coude do aught to pouz plesaunce
And with that worde he fyl down in a traunce
A longe tyme and afterwarde he by stert
This Palamon that thought throughe his herte
He felt a colde swerde sodenly glyde
Fro ire he quoke he nolde no lengre abide
And whan that he hath herd Arcites tale
As he were wode with face dyde and pale
He stert him by oute of the busshes thiche
And seid Arcite false traytours wike
Now art thou bent that louest my lady soo
For whom that I haue this peyne and woo
And art my blode and to my counceyl sworn
And I ful ofte haue tolde the here biforn
And hast be iaped here duke Theseus
And falsely hast chaunged thy name thus
I wil be dede or elles thou shalt dye
Thou shalt nat loue my lady Emely
But I wil loue her only and no moo
For I am Palamon thy mortal foo
And though I haue no wepyn in this place
But oute of pryson am stert by grace
I drede nat outhere thou shalt dye
Or thou ne shalt nat louen Emely
These whiche thou wilt. thou shalt nat asterte
This Arcite with fulle despitous herte
Whan he him knew and hadde his tale herde
As ferse as yron pulled oute his swerde
And sayde thus by god that sytte a bone
Ner it that thou art sche and wode for loue
And ke that thou no wepyn hast in this place

The knyghtes Tale

Thou sholdest neuiz oute of this groue pace
That thou ue shuldest dye of myn hond
For I desye thy surete and thy bond
Which that thou sayst I haue made to the
What berz folke thinke that loue is fre
And I wol loue her magre al thy might
But for as moche as thou art a knyght
And wilnest to darrayne here by bataille
Haue here my trouth to morow I wille nat fayle
Withoute witting of any othez wight
That here I wol be founden as a knyght
And bringen harneys right ynow for the
And chese the best and leue the worst to me
And mete and drinke this nyght wil I bring
ynow for the and clothes for thy bedding
And if so be that thou my lady wyne
And sle me in this wode that I am in
Thou maist wele haue thy lady as for me
This palamon aunswerd I grant it the
And thus they be departed til amow
When either of them hath leid his feith to bozow
Occupied oute of alle charite
A regne that woldest haue no felaw with the
ful soth is said that loue ne lordship
Wil nat his thankes haue ony felawship
We finde this of arcite and palamon
Arcite is ryden anone into the town
And on the morowe anone oz it were light
ful pruely two harneys hath be dight
Both sufficient and mete and to darzeyen
The bataille in the felde bitwix them twyne
And on his horse allone as he was born
He caried the harneys him biforn

And in the groue at tyme and place set
 This arcite and this palamon be n mette
 Tho chaunge gan the colour in her face
 Right as the hunters in regne of trace
 That stondeth at the gappe With a spere
 Whan hunted is the lyou and the bere
 And herith hym come ruffling in the greues
 And brekith both bowes and che leuys
 And thinketh here cometh my mortal enemy
 With oute faile he must be dede or I
 For ether I must sle him atte gappe
 Or he must sle me if I mys happe
 So ferden they in chaunging of thei2 hew
 As sez as ony of them othe2 knew
 Ther nas no gode day ne saluyng
 But streight with oute wordes of rehersing
 Eueriche of them helpith to arme othe2
 As frendly as he were his owen brothe2
 And after that with sharpe speres stronge
 They foyne eche at othe2 wondre long
 Thou myghtist wene that this palamon
 In his feghting were a wode lyou
 And as a cruel tigre was arcite
 As wilde bores can they to giddre smyte
 That froten white as some for ire wode
 Up to the ankle faught they in thei2 blode
 And in this wise I sette them feghting duelle
 And forsoth I wil of the seus you telle
 The desteny mynistre generalle
 That executeth in the worlde ouer alle
 The purueaunce that god hath seen biforn
 So strange it is that though the worlde hath sworn
 The contrary of a thing by ye or nay

The knyghtes Tale

yet somtyme it shal falle vpon a day
That fallith nat est in a thousand yere
And certapuly oure appetites here
Be it of pease hate warre or loue
Alle is ruled by the sight aboue
This mene I now by myghty Theseus
That for to hunte is so desirous
And namely at the grete herte in May
That in his bedde there dwelleth him no day
That he nyght cladde and rideth for to ryde
With hunte and horne and houndes him beside
For in his huntynge hath he such a delite
That it is alle his ioye and alle his appetite
To be him selue the grete hertes bane
For after Mars he serued no dyane
Clere was the day as I haue tolde yf this
And thesenaus with alle ioye and blis
With his yppolita the faire quene
And Emely yclothed alle in grene
And huntynge been they ryden ryally
And to the groue that stode there fast by
In whiche ther was a herte as men him tolde
Duke Theseus the streight wey hath holde
And to the lande he rideth fulle right
For thider was the hert wont to haue his flight
And ouer a broke and so forth on his wey
The duke wolde haue a cours of him or twey
With houndes suche as he list to to comande
And whan this duke was come to the lande
Vndre the sonne he looked and that anon
He was waar of Arcite and Palamon
That foughten breue as it were boles two
The bright swerdes went to and fro

The knyghtes Tale

So hidouſly that with the leſt ſtroke
He ſemed that it wolde haue felled an oke
But what they were nothing he ne wote
This duke with his ſpores his courſez ſmote
And at a ſtert he was betwix them two
And pulld oute his ſuerde and ſayde ho
No more on payne of leſing of your hede
By myghty mars anon he ſhal be dede
That ſmyteth any ſtroke that I may ſe
But tellith me what myſtre men ye be
That been ſo hardy to fight here
Withoute any Iuge or othez officere
As though it were in liſtes ryally
This Palamon aunſuerd haſtely
And ſayde ſir what nedith wordes moo
We haue the deſth deſeruid bothe two
Two woful wrechis be we two captyues
That been encombred of oure owne lyues
And as thou arte a rightful lorde and iuge
Ne yeue vs ne thez mercy ne refuge
But ſle me firſt for ſeint charite
But ſlee my ſelawe ike as wel as me
Or ſle him firſt for though thou know him lite
He is thy mortalie foo this is arcite
That fro thy londe was banyſſhed on his hede
For whiche he hath deſerued to be dede
For this is he that cam to thy gate
And ſayde that he hight philoſtrate
Thus he hath iaped the ful many a pere
And thou haſt made him thy chief ſquyer
And this is he that loueth Emely
For ſithnes the day is come that I ſhal be dye
I make pleyntly my confeſſioun

The knyghtes Tale

That I am that woful Palamon
That hath thy pryson broke wiche ȝyl
I am thy mortal foe and he am I
That loueth so hote Emely the bright
That I wol dye here present in her sight
Therefore I aske deth of my ȝe wyse
But she my felaw in the same wise
For both haue we deserued to be slayn

His worthy Duke aunswered anone ageyn
t And said this is a shorte conclusioun
your owyn mouth be your confessioun
Hath dampned you and I wil it recorde
It nedith nat to payne you with the corde
ye shal be dede by myghty Mars the ride
The quene anone for verray womanhede
Can to wepe and so did Emely
And alle the ladyes in that company
Grette pyte was as them thought alle
That euir suche a chaunce sholde be falle
For gentylmen they were and of grette astate
And no thing but for loue was this debate
And saw theiȝ fleschy woundes wyde and soze
And alle cryden both lasse and more
Haue mercy lordes hyon vs women alle
And on theiȝ bare knees down they falle
And wolde haue kyssed his feet there as he stode
Til at the last staked was his mode
For pyte renneth sone in gentyl hert
And though he first for ire quoke and stert
He considered shortly in a clause
The trespass of them both and eke the cause
And al though that his ire theiȝ gilt accusid
yet in his reason he them bothe excused

The knyghtes Tale

As thus he thought that every man
Wol helpe him selue in loue as he can
And deliuez him selue oute of pryson
And eke in his hert he hadde compassion
Of women for they were euez in one
And in his gentyl hert he thought anoon
And soft vnto him selue he sayd fy
Upon a lord that wyl haue no mercy
But be a spoun both in word and dede
To them that been in repentaunce and drede
As wele as a proude dispitous man
That wyl mayntene that he first began
That lord hath lytel of discrecion
That in suche a caas can no diuision
But wepeth pryde and humblenesse after one
And shortly whan his ire is thus a gone
He gan to loke on them with even blake and bygly
And spake these wordes al on hye
The god of loue a benedicite
How myghty and how grete a lord is he
Arenst his might ther gayneth non obstakyl
He may be cleped a god for his myracle
For he can make at his owyn gypse
Of euery herte as him list deuyse
To here this Arcite and this palamon
That queyntly cam oute of my prison
And myght haue lyued in Thebes ryally
And knowen that I am thei mortal enemy
And that thei deth lieth in my myght also
And yet hath loue maugre thei eyen two
Brought them hithe both for to dye
Now loke the is nat this an hygh folpe
Who may be a foole but if that he loue

The knyghtes Tale

Beholde for goddes sake that sitteth aboue
Se how they blede be they nat wele arayed
Thus hath thei lord the god of loue them payd
Thei waggis and thei fees of thei seruice
And yet they wene for to be ful wise
That serue loue for aught that may falle
But this is yet the best game of alle
That she for whom they haue this Jolite
Can them therfore a smocher thanke as me
She wote nomore of alle this hote fare
By god than wote a cuckow or an hare
But al must be assayd hote or colde
A man must be a foole yong or olde
I wote it by my selue fullong agoon
For in my tyme a seruaunt was I one
And therfore sithnes I knew of lous peyne
And wote how soze it can a man distreyn
As he that hath be caught in this laas
I you foryeue alle holy this trespass
And atte request of the quene that knelith here
And eke of Emely my sustre dere
And ye shal both anone vnto me swere
That neuir mo ye shal my countrere
Ne make warre on me nyght ne day
But be my frendes in alle that ye may
I you foryeue this trespass enerydele
And they him sware his asking faire and wele
And him of lordship and mercy prayed
And he them graunted and thus he sayd

I speke of worthy synage and richesse
t Though that she were a quene or a princesse
Eche of you both is worthy doutelesse
To wedde whan tyme is. But neuir thelesse

The knyghtes Tale

I speke as for my sustre Emely
For whom ye haue this stryf and this jelousy
Ye wote your self ye may nat wedde two
At ones. though that ye fight euil mo
That one of you al be him loth or lief
He mot go wyth in an wyke
This is to sey she may nat haue both
Al be ye neuir so jelous and so lothe
And for thy I you put in this degre
That eche of you shal haue his destene
As him is shapyn and herkyd in what wise
To here your ende of that I shal deuyse
My wyll is this for plat conclusioun
Withoute any more replicacioun
yf that you lyfeth take it for the best
That eueryche of you shalle go where him lyst
Frely withoute raunson or daungere
And this day fyrst wekes ferre nere
Eueryche of you shal bring an hundreth knyghtes
Armed for lystes by at al rightes
Al redy to darre here by batayle
And this behote I you withoute fayle
Upon my trouthe and as I am true knyght
That whether of you both hath that myght
That is to sey whether he or thou
May with his hundreth as I spake of now
Sle his contrary or oute of lystes dryue
Him shal I geue Emely to wyue
To whom that fortune geueth so faire a grace
The lystes shal I make on this place
And god so wisly on my soule rewe
As I shal enyeinge be and true

The knyghtes Tale

ye ſhal none othez ende With me make
That one of you ne ſhalbe dede or take
And if ye thinke this is wele ſayd
Sapeth your auyſe and hold you paide
This is your end and your concluſioun
Who ſokith now lightly but Pagamon
Who ſpryngeth bp for ioy but Arcite
Who coude tel or who coude endite
The ioy that made is in this place
When Theſeus hadde do ſo fayre a grace
But down a knees went euery wight
And thanked him With al theire myght
And namely the Thebans oft ſithe
And thus With gode hope and herte blyth
They take theire leue and homward they ryde
To thebes With his olde waller wyde
I trow men wolde it deme neglegence
yf I forpete to telle the diſpence
Of Theſeus that goth ſo beſyde
To make bp the cyſtes ryally
That ſuche a noble theatre as it was
I dar wele ſay in this worlde there nas
The circuyte a myle therof was aboute
Walled With ſtone and ditched rounde aboute
Ronde was the ſhappe in maner of a compas
ful of degrees the hight of ſixty paas
That whan a man was ſette in one degre
He letted nat his ſelaw for to ſee
Eſtward there was a gate of marbyle white
Weſtwarde ſuche an othez in thoppoſite
And ſhortly to conclud ſuche a place
Was none in erth of ſo lytel ſpace
For in the londe ther was no craſtes man

The knyghtes Tale

That geometry or arismetrik can
Ne portreture ne haruar of ymages
That Theseus ne paymete and wages
The theatre for to make and deuyse
And for to do his ryte and his sacrifice
He Estwarde hath by on the gate aboue
In worshop of Venus goddesse of loue
Do make an autre and an Oratory
And on the Westwarde in memozy
Of mars. hath he made suche an othez
That cost large of gold a fother
And northward in a toure of the walles
Of whyte alabastr and rede corall
An oratory riche for to see
In worshop of dyane goddesse of chastite
Hath Theseus do wrought in noble wise
But yet hadde I forgete for to deuyse
The noble harpyng and the portretures
The shap the countenaunce and the figures
That weren in the oratours thre
First in the temple of Venus thou mayst se
Wrought in the walles ful pytously to beholde
The broken slepis and the sithes colde
The secrete terys and the weymentyng
The fyrre strokes and the desiring
That loues folkes in this worlde enduryn
The othes that thei couenauntes assuryn
Plesaunce hope desire and fool hardynesse
Beaute and pouth baudry and richesse
Charms and socery lespynge and flattery
Dyspense besynesse and jelousy
That wered of yelow gooldes a garland
And a cuckow sitting on her hond

The knyghtes Tale

freestes instrumentes carolles and daunses
Lust and arraye and eke the circumstaunces
Of loue. Whiche that I rehyph and tel shal
Be ordre were pepnted on the walle
And mo than I can make mencion
For sothly alle the mounte of Cicheron
That Venus hath her principalle dwelling
Was shewid on the wal her portryng
With al the ioy and alle the lustyness
Nat was foryeten the porters ydelnesse
Ne Narcisus the fayre yowre agoon
Ne yet the folgy of king Salamon
The enchauntment of medea and hardynesse
Of Jason I wil nat now expresse
Ne yet the strenght of hercules
The enchauntment of medea and Circes
Ne of turnus with his hard spers corage
The riche Cresus captyf in seruage
Thus may ye se that wysdome ne richesse
Beaute strenght strenght ne hardynesse
Ne may with Venus holde champartie
For as she lyst the worlde she may gye
So alie these folke caught were in her laas
Tyl they for wo ful oft sayd alas
Suffiseth these ensamples one or two
And though I coude rehyph a thousand mo
The statne of Venus glorious for to se
Was naked stetryng in the large see
And fro the nauyl down al couerd she was
With walwes grene and bright as any glas
A cytole in her right hand hadde she
And on her hede ful semely on to se
A rose garland freshe and wile smellyng

The knyghtes tale

A boue hez hede dounes also fpyhering
Bifoz hez stode hez sonne cuppyd o
Vpon his shulders wynges hadde he two
And blynde he was as it is ofte seen
A bow he baar and arowes bright and hene
Why sholde I nat eke telle you alle
The portrynge that was vpon the walle
Within the temple of myghty mars the rede
Alle was peynted the walles in length and brede
Lyke to the Estris of the grysey place
That hight the grete temple of mars in trace
In that colde northeren frosty regioun
There as Mars hath his souerayne mansioun
Fyrst on the walle was peynted a forest
In whiche thez duellith neyther man ne best
With knotty and knerry barayn trees olde
Of stubbes sharpe and bitous to beholde
In whiche ran as a rumbyl in a snow
As though it a storme were shold brest euery bow
And downward on an hyl bndre abent
There stode the temple of marce armypotent
Wrought of alle burnyd stele the which the entre
Was long and streyght and gastly for to se
And theroute cam a rage and suche a beyse
That it made alle the gates for to reyse
The northron light at the doze shone
For wyndow on the walle was thez none
Throughe which men myght any light discernen
The dozes wez al of a the maundes etern
p lenchyd ouerthwart and endlong
With iron tow for to make it strong
Euery pylle the temple for to susteyn
Was tonne grete of prou bryght and shene

The knyghtes Take

There saw I first the derke ymagynyng
Of felony and alle the compassyng
The cruel ire rede as any gleden
The pyhpurs and eke the pale drede
The smylez with the knyf vndre the cloke
The shepen brennyng with the blake smoke
The treson of the murdring in the bedde
The open werzys with woundes alle bledde
Contake with bloody knyf and sharpe manace
And ful of chyrlyng was that sozpy place
The sleer of him selue yet saw I there
His herte blode hath bated al his chere
The nape y dryue in the shode an hight
The colde deth with mouth gapyng by right
A myddel of the temple sat myschaunce
With discomforzte and sorpy contenaunce
yet saw I wodenesse laugthing in his rage
Armed compleynt. othes and spers corage
The carayne in the busshe with throte y corue
A thousand slayn. and nat of qualme y storne
The tiraunt with the praye by force y raft
The toun distroyed ther was no thing last
yet saw I brent the shippes hopysteris
The hunter strangled with the wilde berys
The sow fretynge the childe in the cradyl
The cooke y scalded for alle his long ladyl
Nat forgettyn was the infortune of marte
The carter ouer ryden with his owne carte
Vndre the whele ful lowe he lay a down
There were also of martes deuytyoun
The barbour the boucher and the symth
That forged sharpe swerdes in the stith
And al a boue depaynted in a toure

The knyghtes tale

Sawe I conquest sittynge in grete honou
With the sharpe swerd ouer his hede
Hanging by a subtil twyned threde
Dereynted was there the slaughtere of Julius
Of grete Nero and of Anthonius
Albe it that thilke tyme they were vnborn
Yet was thei deth paynted thei biforn
By manysshing of Mars right by figure
So was it shewed right by portreture
As it is depaynted in the sterres aboue
Who shalbe slayn or elles dede for loue
Suffiseth one ensample in stozpes clde
I may nat rehyn them alle though I wold
The statue of Mars vpon a carte stode
Armed and lokyd grym as he were wode
And ouer his hede thei shynen two figures
Of sterres that been called in scriptures
That one puella hight that other Rubens
This god of armes was arayed thus
A wolf thei stode biforn him at his feet
With eyen rede and of a man he ete
With subtil pencil was paynted this stozp
In redoubtyng of Mars and of his glory
Now to the temple of dyane the chaste
As shortly as I can I wil me hast
To telle you alle the descripcion
Depeynted been the wallis by and down
Of huntynge and of shamefast chastite
Ther saw I how woful Calistope
Whan dyane greuyd was with her
Was turned fro a woman to a bere
And after was she made the lode sterre
Thus was it peynted I can say no ferre

The knyghtes Tale

Her sonne is eke a sterre as men may se
Ther saw I dane turned vntyl a tre
I mene nat the goddesse dyane
But peneus doughter which that hight dane
There saw I atheon an hert y maki d
For vengeaunce that he saw dyane al nakid
I saw how that houndes haue him caught
And fretyn him for they knew him naught
Yet y peyntid was a litel furthermoze
How athalante hunted the wyfde boze
And meliager and many othez mo
For which dyane wrought him care and woo
There saw I many a nothez wondre stozp
The whiche me list nat draw in memory
This goddesse on an hert high is sete
With smale houndes al aboute her fete
And vnderneath her feet she had a mone
Weeping it was and shold wane sone
In gawdy grene her statue clothed was
With bow in hond and arowes in a caas
Her eyen cast she ful low a doun
There Pluto hath his derke regioun
A woman tracling was her bifczn
But for her childe was so long vnborn
Ful pytously lucyna gan she calle
And sayd help for thou mayst best of alle
Wele coude he peynte lyuely that it wrought
With many a floreyne he his helwes bought

 Dw been these lystes made and Theseus
n That at his grete cost hath arayed thus
The temples and the theatre euerydel
Whan it was doon it lyked him wondre wele
But stynt I vyl of Theseus aunte

The knyghtes tale

And speke of Palamon and Arcite
The day approacheth of theire retornynge
That eueryche shold an hundreth knyghtes bring
The batayle to darreyn as I pou tolde
And to Athenes theire couenaunt for to holde
Hath euerych of them brought an hundreth knyghtes
Wele y armed for the warre at al rightes
And spkerly there trowed many a man
That neuiz sith the worlde began
As for to speke of knyghthode of thei2 hond
As fer as god hath made see and lond
Nas of so fe w so noble a company
For euery wight that couid cheuatre
And woide his thankes haue a passing name
Hath prayd that he might be of that game
And wel was him that therto chosen was
For if the2 fyl to morowliche suche a caas
ye know wel that euery lusty knyght
That loueth paramours and hath his myght
Were it in englond or elles wher
They wolde thei2 thankes wille to be the2
To fight for a lady & benedicite
It were a lusty sight for to se
And right so faireth they with Palamon
With him the2 went knyghtes many oon
Som wold be armed in habergeon
Som in brest plate and in light gippon
And som wol haue a peiz of plates large
And som wolde haue a pryce shield and targe
Som wold be armed on his legges wele
And haue an ay and som a mace of stele
The2 is no new gypse but it was holde
Armed were they as I haue tolde

The knyghtes Tale

Eueriche after his own opunyon
There mayst thou se compnyng with Palamon
Figurge him selue the grete kyng of trace
Blake was his berde and manly was his face
The circles of his eyen in his hede
They glowden betwix yelow and rede
And lyke a gryffyn lohed he aboute
With hempte heres in his browes stoute
His lymes grete his braunes herde and strong
His shuldres brode his armes rounde and long
And as the gypse was in his cowntre
Fulke high vpon a chare of golde stode he
With four white bores in the trays
In stede of cote armure ouer his harneys
With nayles yelow and bright as any golde
He hadde a bere shynne cool blake for olde
His long heres were hempt behinde his bake
As any rauens fether it shone for blake
A wrethe of golde arme grete of huge weyght
Vpon his hide sat ful of stones bright
Of fyn rubyes and of fyn diamantes
Aboute his chare ther went alauntes
Twenty and moo as grete as any steez
To hunte atte spoun or elles at the deez
And folowed him with mosel fast y bounde
Colers of golde and tozettes spyled rounde
An hundreth lordes he hadde in his rowte
Armed wel with bertes sterne and stoute
y the Arcite as men in stozp fynde
W The strong Emetrius the king of ynd
Vpon a bay stede y trapped alie in stele
Armed with a cloth of guld y diaprid wele
Cam ridyng lyke god of armes marce

The knyghtes tale

His cloth armure was of cloth of tarce
Couched with perles white rounde and grete
His sadyl was of brent golde new y bete
A mantelet on his shulders hanging
Bret ful of rubyes bright as fyre sparkling
His bright crispe here lyke rynges were ronne
And that was yelow and glitered as the sonne
His nose was high his eyen bright cytrine
His lippes rounde his colour was sangwyne
A few fraibles in his face were sprent
Betwix yelow and som dele blake y meynt
And as a loun he lohed aboute faste
Of wythpere of age y him cast
His herde was wele begonne for to spring
His boyce was as a trompe thondring
Upon his hede he wered of laure grene
A garland freshe and lusty for to sene
Upon his honde he baar for his ded wyte
An egge tame as any lyle white
An hundreth knyghtes hadd he with him there
Al armed saue theire hedes in alle theire here
Were richely arraped in al maner thinges
Trustith wele al erles dukes and kinges
Were gadred in this noble company
For loue and encrece of cheualrye
Aboute this king there ronnen on euery parte
Wele many a tame lion and libart
And in this wise the lordes alle and som
Been on the sonday to the cite com
Aboute pry me and in the towyn a lycht
This Theseus this duke this worthy knyght
When he hadde brought them into his cite
And ynned them eueryche at his degre

The knyghtes Tale

He festith them and doth so grete labouz
To ease them and to do them alle honoure
That men wenen that no mannes Witte
Of none astate ne coude amende it
The mynstralcye the seruice at the feste
The grete gistes to the moost and the leste
The riche arrape of Theseus paleys
Ne who sat first ne last bpon the dese
Or what ladies fayrest been or best daunsyng
Or which of them can best daunce or syng
Ne who moost felynghly spekeþ of loue
What halwes syt on the pirches aboue
What houndes lye in the flooz doun
Of al this make I no mencion
But of the effeete that thynketh me best
Now comyth the poynthe and herkyne if ye lyst

He sonday at nyght or day began to spring
t Whan palamon herd the larke syng
Al though it were nat day by oures two
yet song the larke and palamon right tho
With holy herte and with an high corage
Is ryse to wende on his pilgramage
Vnto the blisful Sotherea benygne
I mene Venus honourable and digne
And in her houre he walked forth apace
Vnto the lystes there her temple was
And doun he knelith and with humble chere
And with hert soze he sayde as ye shal here
fayrest o fayre olady myn Venus
Doughter to Iouis and spouse to Icanus
That gladdest al the mount of Sithereon
for that loue that thou haddest to Adon
haue pytee on my byttre teres smert

The knyghtes Case

And take my humbly praye to thy hert
Alas I haue no langage for to telle
The effecte ne the turment of myn helle
Myn hert may nat myn harmes be wrey
I am so sorowful that I can nat sey
But mercy lady bright that knowest wele
My thought and seest the harmes that I fele
Considre this and rewe spon my soze
As wysly as I shal for euirmore
Enforth my myght thy true seruauent to be
And holde warre lady alwey with chasteite
That I make myn auowe so ye me help
I kepe nat of armes for to pylpe
Ne I aske nat to morow for to haue the victorie
Ne renoun in this caas ne beynngloze
Of pryse of armes to blow by and down
But I wolde fully haue possioun
Of Emele and dye in her seruice
Fynde thou the manere how and what wyse
I retche nat but it may bettre be
To haue victorie of them or they of me
So that I haue my lady in myn armes
For though so be that mars be god of armes
Yowr vertue is so grete in heuyn aboue
That if thou lyst I shalle haue my loue
Thy temple wol I worship euirmo
And on an autre where I ryde or goo
I wol do sacrifice and spres bete
And if ye wyl nat so my lady swete
Than pray I the to morow with a spere
That Arcite me though the herte bere
Than reche I nat whan I haue lost my lyf
Though that Arcyte wedde her to wif

The knyghtes Tale

This is the effect and ende of my prayez
pene me my loue my blissed lady dere
Whan that the oryson was done of palamon
His sacrifice he did and that anone
ful pitously With alle circumstaunces
al telle I nat now his obseruaunces
And alle the statue of Venus shoke
And made a signe wherby that he toke
That his prayez accepted was that day
for though the figure shewed delay
yet wist he wele that graunted was his bone
And with gladd herte he went him home sone
The thriddeoure equal that palamon
Began to Venus temple for to goon
þy rose the sonne and þy rose Emely
And to the temple of dyane gan hye
hez maydens that she with hez thidez lad
ful redely with them the fyre they had
Thencence the clothes and the remenaunt alle
That to the sacrifice longen shalle
The hornes ful of methe as was the gypse
There lacked naught to doon hez sacrifice
Smoking the temple ful of clothes fayre
This Emely with hert debonayr
hez body wesse with water in a wellle
But how she did there I daz nat telle
But it be any thing in generalle
And yet it were a game for to here alle
To him that menyth wele it were no charge
But it is gode a man be at his large
hez bright here was hempt and vntressed alle
And a crowne of grene oke serpyalle
Upon hez hede was set ful fayre and mete

The knyghtes Tale

Two fyres on the autre can she bete
And did hez thinges as men may beholde
In state of Thebes and in bokes olde
Whan kyndled was the fyre with pytous chere
Vnto dyane she spake as ye may here
O chaste goddesse of the wode grene
To whom both heuyn and erth and see is sene
Quene of the regne of pluto derke and low
Goddesse of maydens that my hert hast know
ful many a yere and wotest what I desyre
As hepe me fro the vengeaunce and thyn ire
That Atheon abought trulpy
O chaste goddesse wele wotest thou that I
Desyre to be a mayden alle my lyf
Ne neuir wol I be loue ne wyf
I am thou wotest yet of thy company
A mayden. and loue huntynge and venozp
And for to walken in the wodes wilde
And nat to be a wif and be with childe
Naught wil I haue company of man
Now help me lady sithnes thou mayst and can
for the thre fourmes that thou hast in the
And palamon that hath suche loue to me
And eke Arcite that loueth me so soze
This grace I pray the withouten more
As send loue and pease bitwix them two
And from me turne a wey thei herdes so
That al thei hote loue and alle thei desire
And al thei besy turment and al thei fyre
Be queynte or turned in a nother place
And if so be thou wil do me no grace
Or if my desteny be shapen soo
That I shal nedes haue one of them two

The knyghtes Tale

as send me him that moost desireth me
Beholde goddesse of clene chastite
The byttre teres that on my chekes falle
Sithnes thou art a mayde and hepar of vs alle
My maydenhede thou kepe and wele conserue
And whyles I lyne a mayden wol I the serue
The fyres brenne bpon the auters here
Whil Emely was thus in her prayez
But sodenly she saw a light queynt
For right anone oon of the fyres queynt
And quiked a pen and after that anone
That othez fyre was queynt and alle agone
And as it queynt it made a whistling
As doon these wete brondes in their brennyng
And at the brondes ende out ran anone
As it were droppes bloody many one
For why she so for agast was Emely
Than she was almoost mad and gan to cry
For she ne wist what it signified
But only for fere thus hath she cryed
And wept that it was pyte to here
And therewithalle dyane gan appere
With bow in honde right as an huntresse
And sayd doughter stynt thy heuy nesse
Among the goddes an high it is affermed
And by etern worde writen and confermed
Thou shalt be wedded vntyl one of them two
That haue for the so moche care and wo
But on to whiche of them may I nat telle
Fare wele for I may no lenger dwellle
The fyres whiche on myn antre brenne
Shal the declare or that thou go henne
Thyn auenture of loue as in this caas

The knyghtes Tale

*And with that worde the arrowes in the caas
Of the goddesse clateryng fast and ryng
And forth she went and made a banysshing
For whiche this Emely astonyed was
And sayd what a mounteth this alas
I put me vndre thy protection
Dyane and in thy disposicion
And home she goth anone the next wey
This is the effecte ther is no more to sey
In the next houre of mars after this*
Write vnto the temple walked is
a Of fyers mars to do his sacrifice
With alle the rightes of his paynem wise
With pytous hert and high deuocioun
Right thus to Mars he sayde his oryson
O strong god that in the rignes colde
Of trace honoured art and lord of hold
And hast in euery regne and euery lond
Of armes al the Brydel in thy hond
And them fortunest as the list best deuyse
Accept of me my pytous sacrifice
If so be that my thought may deserue
And that my myght be wor thy to serue
Thy godhede that I may be one of thy
Than pray I the re w on my pyne
For that peyn and that hote fyre
In whiche thou Brennest whilom for desire
Whan that thou vsedyst the beaute
Of fayre yong fresshe Venus fre
And haddest her in thy armes at thy wil
And though the ones a tyme myssyl
Whan Ecanus had caught the in his laas
And fond the liggynge by his wif alas

The knyghtes Tale

For thikke sorow that was in thygh here
Haue routhe a wele upon my paynes smert
I am pong and ynkonnyng as thou wotest
And as I trow with loue offended moost
Than euer was any lyues creature
For she that doth me alle this wo endure
Ne recketh neuer whether I synke or flete
And wele I wote or she me mercy hete
I must with strengith wyne hee in the place
And wele I wote withoute help and grace
Of the may nat my strenght a bayle
Than help me lord to morow in my batayle
For that fyre that whylom brent the
As wele as that fyre now brenneth me
And do that I to morow haue the victorie
Oyn the trauayle and thygh be the glory
Thy souerayn temple wil I moost honouren
Of any place alwey and moost lauboren
In thy plesaunce and in thy craftes strong
And in thy temple I wille my baner hong
And alle the armes of my company
And euirmore vnto the day I dye
Etern fyre I wol bifoze the fynde
And eke to this anowe I wil me bynde
Oyn berd my here that hangith long a doun
That neuir yet felt offensioun
Of rasour ne of shere I wille the yene
And be thy true seruaunt whiles I lyue
Now lord haue routhe upon my sorowes fore
yene me the victorie I aske no more
The praye stynt of Arcite the strong
The rynges that on the temple doze hong
And eke the dozes clattered so fast

The knyghtes Tale

Of whiche arcite somwhat him agast
The fyres brent vpon the auters bright
That it gan al the temple for to light
A swete smel anone the grounde by pas
And arcite anone his hond by gas
And more encence in to the fyre cast
With othere rytes mo and at the last
The statue of mars began his haubreke ryng
And with that sounde he herd a murmurynge
ful low and dym and sayd thus. victorie
for whiche he paue to Mars honour and glory
And thus with ioy and hope wile to fare
Arcite anone to his pyne is fare
As fayn as foule is of the bright sonne
And right anone suche stryfe is ther begon
for that grauntynge in heuyn aboue
Betwix venus goddesse of loue
And mars the sterne god armed potent
That iupiter was besy it to stynt
Tyl that the pale saturnus the colde
That knew so many of auentures olde
foud in his olde experience and arte
That he ful sone hath pleased euery parte
As soth is sayd elde hath grette auantage
In elde is both wisdom and vsage
Men may the olde oute renne but nat oute rede
Saturne anone to stynt stryfe and drede
Al be it that it is apenst his kynde
Of al this triue he can remedies fynde
My dere doughter venus quod Saturne
My cours that hath so wyde for to turne
Hath more powere than wote any man
My is the drenchynge of the see so wan

The knyghtes Tale

Myne is the pryson in the derke cote
Myne is the strangeling and hanging by the throte
The murmur and the chowles rebelling
The groynyng and the pryue enpossonyng
I do vengeaunce and playn correction
Whyles I dwell in the signe of the lyoun
Myne is the ruyne of the high halles
The falling of the toures and the walles
Upon the mynour or the carpentere
I slough Sampson shakynge the pylar
And myne been the maladres colde
The derke treason and the castes olde
My lokynge is the fadre of pestilence
Now wepe nomore I shal doyn diligence
That palamon that is thy own knyght
Shal haue his lady as thou him behight
And Mars shal hepe his knyght yet neuirtheless
Betwix you thez must be somtyme pease
Al be ye nat of one complexioun
That causeth alday suche deuyssioun
I am thyng al redy at thy wille
Wepe nomore I wil thy lust fulfyll
Now wil I stynt of the goddes aboue
Of Mars and Venus goddesse of loue
And telle you al playnly as I can
The grete effecte for whiche I began
¶ Rete was the fest in athens that day
And eke the lusty season of that may
Made euery wight to be in suche pleasaunce
That alle that monday iust they and daunce
And spenden it in Venus high seruyse
And bicause that they shulden aryse
Erly for to se that grete sight

The knyghtes tale

Unto theire rest went they at nyght
And on the morow whan day gan spring
Of horse and noyse harneys and claterpny
Ther was in hostetres alle aboute
And to the paleys rode ther many a route
And lordes upon stedes and palfreys
There mayst thou se a deupsyng of harneys
So bncouth and so riche and wrought so wele
Of goldsmythrye of brouderp and of stele
The sheldes bright testers and trappoures
Golde he wen helmes haubrekes and cote armures
Lordes in paramentes on their couzlers
Knyghtes of retenue and the squyers
Nayling the speres and helmes boheling
Gyding of sheldes with leyners lasing
There as neede is they were nothing ydel
The fomp stedes on the golden brydel
Gnawing. and fast the azmerers also
With fyle and hamez priching to and fro
yemen on fote and compys many one
With shorte staves thicke as they may gone
Pyppes trompes naconers and clariouns
That in the bataylle blowen bloody foundes
The paleys ful of peple by and down
There thre there ten holding their questiou
Demyng of the Theban knyghtes two
Some sayde thus som sayd it shalbe so
Som held with him with the black berd
Som with the halled som with the thicke berd
Som sayde he lokyd grym and he wold fighe
He hath a sparth of xx pounde of wyght
Thus was the halles ful of deupnyng
Long after that the sonne gan to spring

The knyghtes Tale

The trette Theseus that of his sleep awaked
With mynstralcye and noyse that was made
Held yet the chambre of his paleys riche
Tyl that the theban knyghtes bothe by the
Honoured were and into the paleys fet
Duke Theseus is at the wyndow set
Arayed right as he were god in trone
The peple preceded thider ward ful sone
Him for to seyn and doon high reuerence
And to herkyn his best and his sentence
An herowde on a scaffold made an
Tyl al the noyse of the peple was do
And whan he saw the peple of noyse al styl
Thus shewed he the myghty dukys wille
The lord hath of his high discrecioun
Considred that it were destruction
To gentyl blode to figheten in this wise
Of mortal batayle now in this emprise
Wherfore to shapen that they shulde nat dye
He wil his first purpos modifye
Noman therfore on peyne of losse of lyf
No maner shotte ne pollay ne short knyf
In the listes send or thider bring
Ne short swerd for to stike with poynt bityng
Ne noman ne draw ne bere it be his syde
Ne noman shal vnto his felaw ryde
But one cours with a sharpe grounde spere
Fornynng if him lyst on fote him selue to were
And he that is at myschief shal be take
And nat slayn but be brought to the stake
That shal be ordeyned on either syde
But thider he shal by force and there abyde
And if so falle the chesteyn be take

The knyghtes tale

On either syde or elles sleeth his make
No lengre shal the turneyng last
God spede you go forth and ley on fast
With long swerdes and maces ley on your spelle
Both now your wey this is the lordes wil
The voyce of peple touched the heuy
So loude cryed they with mery steuy
God saue suche a lord that is so gode
He willith nat destruction of blode
Up goth the trumpes and the melody
And to the listes ridyth this company
By ordenaunce through out the cyte large
Hanged with cloth of golde and nat with sarge
ful lyke a lorde this noble duke gan ryde
These two Thebanis upon either syde
And after rode the queene and Emely
And after that a nother company
Of one and othez after their degre
And thus they passe through the cyte
And to the listes come they betyme
It nas nat of the day fully pry me
Whan sette was Theseus riche on high
Spolita the queene and Emely
And othez ladies in degrees aboute
Unto the setes preseth alle the route
And west ward through the pates bndre marte
Arcite and eke the houndred of his parte
With banez rede is entred right anone
And in that selue moment palamon
Is bndre venus est ward in that place
With banez white and hardy there of face
In al the worlde to seke up and down
So euyr withoute any variacioun

The knyghtes Tale

There nere suche companys tway
for there was none so wise that coude sey
That any had of othez auantage
Of worthynesse ne estate ne age
So eyn were they chosen for to gesse
And in two renges feyre they them dresse
And whan that theire names red were euerichoon
That in theiz nombregyle were thez none
Tho were the pates shyt and cryed was loude
Do now pour deuour pong knyghtes proude
The heroudes left theiz pricking vp and down
Now ryngen trompes loude and clarioun
Thez is nomore to sey but est and west
In goth the sperys ful sadly in the rest
In goth the sharp spore in the syde
Thez seen men who can iust and who can ryde
There shpueryng shaftes vpon sheldes thicke
He feleth through the hart spoon the pryck
Up springeth speres t wenty fote on hight
Out goon the swerdys as the siluez bright
The helmes they to helwen and to shrede
Out brest the blode with sterne stremes rede
With myghty maces the bones they to brist
He through the thickest of the throng can thrist
Thez stomblen stedys strong and down goth al
He rolleth vndre fote as doth a bal
He fopneth on his feet with his trunchon
And he hurtlith with his hors adoun
He through the body is hurt and sithnes take
Magre his hede and brought to the stake
As for ward was right there he must abyde
A nother led is on that othez syde
And somtyme doth them The seus to rest

The knyghtes tale

Them for to refresshe and drynke if that they lyst
Ful oft a day haue the Thebans two
To gydez y met and wrought epyther wo
Unhorsed hath eche one of them twey
Ther is no tygre in the bale of galegophey
When that her whelp is stolen when it is lyte
So cruel on the hunt as is Arcite
For ielous hert spon this palamon
Ne in belmarpe ther is no fel spoun
That hunted is for angre wood
Ne of his pray desireth so the blode
As palamon to sle his foo Arcite
The ielous strokes on theire helmes byte
Dute rynneth blood on both theire spdes rede
Som tyme an end ther is of euery dede
For oz the sonne vnto rest went
The strong king Emetrius gan hent
This palamon as he fought with Arcite
And made his swerd depe in his flesshe bite
And by the force of tWenty was he take
Unyolden and draue to the stake
And in the rescous of this palamon
The strong king Emetrius is born a down
And king Emetrius for alle his strenght
Is born oute of his sadyl a swerde lenght
So hit him palamon oz he were take
But al for noght he was brought to the stake
His hardy hert ne myght him help noght
He must abyde whan he was caught
By force and eke by composicioun
Who soroweth now but woful palamon
That must nomore go a yen to fight
And whan that Theseus hadde seye that sight

The knyghtes Tale

Unto the folke that foughten thus echone
He cryed than hoo nomore for it is done
I wol be true iuge and nat party
Arcyte of Thebes shal haue Emely
That by his fortune hath her feyr y wonne
anone there is a noyse of peple begon
for ioy of this so loude and high with alle
That it semed that the lystes shuld falle
W hat can now fayre Venus done aboue
What sayeth she what doth the quene of loue
But wepith so for wantyng of her wille
Tyl that her tere in the listes fylle
She sayd I am shamed doutlesse
Saturne sayd doughter holde thy pease
Mars hath his wille the knyght hath his bone
And by my hede thou shalt be eased sone
The trompettes with the lowde mynstralsyre
The heroudes that ful loude ylle and crye
Been in thei ioy for the wel of dane Arcite
But herkenth me and stynt noyes alite
Whiche a myracle there befelle anone
This spers Arcite hath his helme of done
And on a courser for to shew his face
He pryched endlong the large place
Lokyng bpward vnto this Emely
And she ateyn him cast a frendly eye
And was alle in his chere as in his hert
Dute of the grounde a fyre infernal stert
from Pluto sent at the request of saturne
for whiche his horse for fere gan to turne
And lept a syde and foundred as he lepe
And oz that Arcite may take hepe
He pight him on the pomel of his hede

The knyghtes tale

That in the place he lay as he were dede
His breest to brosten with the sadde bow
As blake he lay as any cool or crowe
So was the blode ronne in his face
Anone he was born oute of the place
With herte soze to Theseus paleys
Tho was he corupn oute of his harneys
And in a bedde brought ful fayre and blyue
For he was yet in memory and alpye
And alwey cryng after Emely
Duke Theseus with alle his company
Is come home to Athenes his cyte
With alle blis and grete solennyte
Al be it that this auenture was falle
He nolde nat discomforthe them alle
Men sayd eke that Arcite shuld nat dye
He shulde be heled of his malady
And of a nother thing they wer sayn
That of them alle thez was noon slayn
Alle were they soze hurt and namely one
That with a spere was thrilled the breest bone
The othez woundes and the broke armes
Som had salues and some had charmes
Fermacyes of herbes and eke sane
They dronken for they wold thez lyues hane
For whiche this noble duke as he wel can
Comforteth and honoured euery man
And made reuel al the long nyght
Vnto the straunge lordes as was right
Ne there was holden no discomfytynge
But as a iustes or a tourneyng
For there was holden no discomfiture
For faylyng nys but auenture

The knyghtes Tale

Ne to be ladde by force into the stake
Unyeldyng and with twenty knyghtes take
One pryson allone withoute mo
And harped forth by arme fote and too
And eke his stede dryuen forth with stauens
With fotemen both yemen and eke knaues
It nas yretted him no vilony
There may no man clepe it cowardrye
For whiche anon duke Theseus let crye
To stynten alle rancour and enuie
The degre as wel in one syde as in othez
And either syde lyke as othez brothez
And gaf them giftes after thei degre
And fully held a fest daies thre
And conueyed the kinges worthily
Out of his towne a iourney largely
And home went every man the right wey
There was no more but far wele haue gode day

O f this batayle I wil no more endite

But speke of palamon and arcite
Swellith the brest of Arcite and the soze
Encreseth at his hert ay more and more
The clotered blode for any lechecraft
Corrupteth and in his bouke is last
That netheze vyne blode ne ventusyng
Ne drinke of herbes may be his helppng
The vertue expulsyf or anymal
Fro that vertue ycleped natural
Ne may the benym boyde ne expelle
The yppes of his longes gan to swelle
And every laceret in his brest adoun
Is shent with benym and corrupcioun
Him gayneth nothing for to get his lyf

The knyghtes Tale

Dompte by ward and down ward layatp
Al is to bresten thilke regioun
Nature hath in him no dompnacioun
And certyanly there nature wil nat wirche
fare wele phispe go here the man to the churche
This is al and som Arcite must dye
for whiche he sendith after Emely
And palamon that was his cosyn dere
Than sayd he thus as ye shal after here
Nat may the woful spyret in myn hert
Declare a poynte of al my sorowes smert
To you my lady that I loue moost
But biqueth the seruice of my goost
To you abouen euery creature
Sithnes that my lyf may no lenger dure
Allas the woo allas the peynes strong
That I for you haue suffered and so long
Allas the deth allas my Emely
Allas the departyng of oure company
Allas my hertes quene allas my wif
My hertes lady ender of my lyf
What is this worlde what a sketh men to haue
Now with his loue now colde in his graue
Alone withouten any company
fare wele my swete foo my Emely
And soft take me in your armes tway
for the loue of god and herkeneth what I say
I haue here with my cosyn palamon
Had stryf and rancor many a day agone
for loue of you and of my jelouspe
And Jupitez so wisely my soule ty
To speken of a seruaunt properly
With circumstaunces alle trulpy

The knyghtes Tale

That is to seyn trouthe honouur and knyghtshede
Wisdom humbleste estate and hight hyndred
freedom and alle that longith to that arte
So Jupiter haue of my soule parte
As in this worlde right now know I none
So worthy to be loued as palamon
That serupth you and wol do alle his lypf
And if that euil ye shal be a wif
Forgetteth nat Palamon the gentylman
And with that worde his speche fayle gan
For fro his fete vnto his brest was come
The colde of dethe that hath him ouercome
And yet more ouer for in his armes two
The bytalle strengith is lost and al ago
Only the intelectys withouten more
That duellith in his hert syke and sore
Can fayle whan the herte felith deth
Duffeth his eyen to and fayleth his brest
But on his lady yet cast he his eye
His last worde was mercy Emely
His spyret chaunged the hous and went there
As I can neuir I can nat telle where
There I stynt I am nat deupnestez
Of soules synde I nat in this regystre
Ne me lyst the opunions to telle
Of them though they writen where they duelle
Arcyte is colde there mars his soule gup
Now wol I speke forth of Emely
Shryght Emely and owleth palamon
And The seus his sustez toke anone
Swonynge and bare her fro the cors a wey
What helpith it to tary forth the day
To telle how she wept both eue and morow

The knyghtes Tale

For in suche caas women haue suche sorow
Whan that thei busbondes be fro them goo
That for the more part they sorowen so
Dreles falle in suche a malady
That at the last certaynly they dye
Infynite been the sorowes and the teres
Of olde folke and folke of tendre yeres
In al the toun for deth of this Theban
For him thei wepiþ bothe childe and man
So grette wepyng was thei none certayn
Whan Hector was brought alle freshe y slain
To troye. alas the pyte that was there
Crachyng of chekes rentyng eke of here
Wher woldest thou be dede these wymmen crye
And haddest golde ynough and Emely
No man myght glade Theseus
Sawnyng his olde fader egeus
That knew this worldes transmutacioun
As he hadde seen it chaunge by and down
Joy after wo and wo after gladnesse
And shewed him ensample and lyknysse
Ryght as thei deyde neuir man quod he
That he ne lyued in erth in som degre
Ryght so thei lyued neuir man he sayde
In alle this worlde that somtyme he ne deyde
This worlde is but a throughe fare ful of wo
And we be pylgrames passyng to and fro
Deth is an ende of euery worldes soze
And ouer al this yet sayde he mekyl more
To this effecte ful wisely to enforste
The peple that they shulde them recomforste
Duke Theseus with alle his besy cure
Cast now where that the sepulture

The knyghtes Tale

Of gode Arcite may best y maked be
And eke moost honourable in his degre
And at the last he toke conclusioun
That there first Arcite and palamon
Hadden for loue the batayle them bitwene
That in that sekue groue swete and grene
There as he hadde his amorous desires
His complaynt and for loue his hote spres
He wolde make a fyre in whiche the office
Funeralle he myght fully accomplice
And comaunded anone to hache and to heu
The oles olde and ley them on a reu
In culppys wele arayed for to brenne
His officers with swyft feet they renne
And ryden anone at his comaundment
And after this Theseus hath sent
After a bere and he it ouer spradde
With clothes of golde the richest that he hadde
And of the same sote he clothed Arcite
Upon his hondes his gloues white
And on his hede a crowne of laurez grene
And in his honde a swerde ful bright and kene
He layde him bare the visage on the bere
Ther with he wipte that pyte was to here
And for the peple sholde se him alle
Whan it was day he brought him in the halle
That roreth on the cryng and the soun
Thocam this woful theban palamoun
With flotered berd and rugged as the heres
In clothes blake dropped al with teres
And passing othez of wepyng & melp
The reufullest of alle the company
And in a smorche as the seruice shuld be

The knyghtes Tale

The more noble and riche in his degre
Duke Theſeus leet thre ſtedes forth bring
That trapped were in ſtele al glytering
And couered with the armes of Arcite
And eke vpon the ſtedes grete and white
Theſe ſattyn folke of whiche one bare his ſhelde
A nother a ſpere vpon his ſhulders helde
The thridde bare with him his bow turkeys
Of brend golde was the caas and the harneys
And ryden forth a paas with ſorowful chere
Toward the groue as ye ſhal after here
The nobleſt of the grekes that there were
Vpon theiſe bakes caryden the bere
With ſlacke paas and epen rede and wete
Throughe oute the cyte by the maſter ſtrete
That ſpradde was al with blake and wondreſpe
Right of the ſame is the ſtrete y wrpe
Vpon the right honde went olde egeus
And on that otheſe ſyde duke Theſeus
With beſelles of golde in theiſe hond ful fyne
And ful of hony mylke blode and wyne
Eke palamon with ful grete company
And after that cam woful Emely
With fyre in honde as was that tyme the gypſe
To do the office of the funerall ſervice
High labour and ful grete apparilling
Was at the ſeruyce of the fyre making
That with his grene toppe the heuyn raught
And twenty ſawdom of brede the armes ſtraught
This is to ſey the bowes were ſo brode
Of ſtraue fiſt was leyde many a lode
But hou the fyre was made vpon an hight
Ne eke the names how the trees hight

The knyghtes Take

As oke fyrre byrche as the alder holme popule
Maple thorn beche as pe boy chesten lynn laurel
Wilow elme plane hasil and whypultre
How they were felled shal nat be tolde for me
Ne how the gotes rennyng by and down
Disherytred of theiȝ habitacioun
In whiche they woned in rest and pease
Nymphes faunes and a madrides
Ne how the bestes and the byrdes alle
Fledde for fere whan the wode gan falle
Ne how the grounde agast was of the light
That was nat wont to se the sonne bright
Ne how the fyre was couched first with stre
And than with drye stiches cloven on thre
And than with grene wode and spycery
And than with cloth of golde and with perry
And garlandes hanging with many a floure
The myrre the encence with suete odouze
Ne how Arcite lay among alle this
Ne what richesse aboute his body ther is
Ne how that Emely as was the gypse
Put in the fyre of funerall service
Ne how she swoyned whan made was the fyre
Ne what she spache ne what was her desire
Ne what Jewelles men in the fyre cast
Whan that the fyre was grete and brenned fast
Ne how som cast theiȝ shelde and som theiȝ spere
And of theiȝ westmentes whiche that they were
And cuppes ful of mylke and blode
In to the fyre that brent as it were wode
Ne how the grekes with an huge route
Threys ryden al the fyre aboute
Upon the left honde with an high showtyng

The knyghtes Tale

And thyres with theire speres clatering
And thyres how the ladies gan cry
Ne how that led was homward Emely
Ne how Arcite is brent to asshen colde
Ne how the lyche wakes were y holde
That ilke nyght ne how the grekes pley
The wake pleyes ne hepe I nat to say
Whiche wraстelith best naked with oyle anoynt
Ne who that bare him best at the poynt
I wil nat telle alle how they goon
Home to Athens when the play is doon
But shortly to the poynt than wol I wende
And make of my long tale an ende

By pprocess and by length of certayn peres
B Al stynt is the moornyng and the chere
Of grekes by one generalle assent
Than semeth me ther was a parlement
At Athens upon a certayn poynthe and caas
And among the which poynthes spoken was
To haue with certayn countrees alpaunce
And haue fully of Thebans obeyssaunce
For whiche this noble Theseus anon
Leet send after gentyl palamon
Whynyst of him what was the cause and why
But in his blake clothes sorowfully
He cam at his comaundement an hye
Tho Theseus sent for Emely
Whan they were set and hyst was alle the place
And Theseus abyden hath a space
Draunyt worde cam fro his wise breest
His eyen set he there as him self
And with a sadde visage he sithed styll
And after that right thus he sayd his wyll

The Knyghtes Tale

The first mouer of the cause aboue
Whan he first made the fayre cheyne of loue
Grette was the effecte and high was his entent
Wele wist he why and what therof he ment
For with that fayre cheyne of loue he bond
The fyre the eyre the water and the lond
In certayn bondes that may nat fle
The same prynce and that mouer quod he
Hath stablissed in this wretched world adoun
Certayn daies and duracioun
To alle that is engendred in this place
Duer the whiche day they may nat passe
Al may they yet tho daies abrigge
Thez nedith nat auctorpte to lette
For it is proued by experience
But that me lyst to declare my sentence
Than may wele men by this ordre discerne
That thylke mouer stable is and eterne
Wel may men know but it be a fool
That euery party is derpyed fro his hole
For nature hath nat take his begynnynge
Of one part or of a cantel of a thing
But of a thing that parfyte is and stable
Descending so tyl it be corrupable
And therfore for his wise purueaunce
He hath so wele besette his ordenaunce
That speses of thinges and progessiouns
Sholden endure by successiouns
And nat eterne withoute any lye
This mayst thou vnderstonde and se at eye
To the oke that hath so long a nozysing
Fro the tyme that it first gynneth to spring
And hath so long lyf as ye may see

The Knyghtes Tale

yet at the laste wasted is the tre
Considreth eke hou the hard stoon
Dre dre ouz feet on whiche we tradde and goon
yet wastith it as it lieth by the wey
The brode rpuer somtym we with dre
The grete townes se we wane and wende
Than ye se that alle thing hath an ende
Of man and woman se we wele also
That nedes in one of these termes two
This is to sayn in youthe or elles in age
He moot be dede the king as shal a page
Som in his bedde som in the depe see
Som in the large feld as men nay se
Thez herpith naught for alle goon that ilke wey
Than may I say alle thing mot nedes depe
What maketh this but Jupiter the king
That is prince and cause of al thing
Conuertynge al vnto his propre wille
For whiche it is derpued soth to telle
And here agaynes no creature alpye
Of no degre auapleth for to stryue
Than it is wisdom as thinketh me
To make vertue of necessite
And take it wele that we may nat esche we
And namely that to vs alle is due
And who so grutchithought he doth folp
And rebel is to him that al may gye
And certaynly a man hath moost honoure
To dyen in his moost excellent floure
Whan he is sphe: of his gode name
Than hath he do his frrende ne him no shame
And gladder oughit his frende be of his deth
Whan with honou: so by yolden is his breth

The Kyngtes Tale

Than whan his name appalled is for aȝe
for alle forȝeten is than his basselage
Than is it best as for a worthy fame
To dyen whan a man is best of name
The contrary for alle this is wilfulnes
Why gruge we why haue we heynesse
That gode Arcite of cheualry the flouz
Departed is with duety and honouȝ
Dute of the soule pryson of this lyf
Why gruched his cosyn and his wyf
Of his welefare that loueth him so wele
Can he them thanke nay god woot neuȝ a dese
That bothe his soule and eke them offende
And yet they may theȝr lustes nat amende
What may I conclude of this long scryp
But after wo I rede vs be mery
And thanke Jupiter of alle his grace
And oȝ we departen from this place
I rede that we make es sorowes t wo
O parspyte ioy lastyng euȝmo
And loketh now where moost sorow is ynn
There wil I first amende and begynne
Suster quod he this is my ful assent
With alle the auyse of my parlement
That gentyl palamon pouȝ owȝ knyght
That serueth you with hert and myght
And euȝ hath do sithen ye first him knew
That ye shal of pouȝ grace on him rewe
And take him for husbond and for sorde
Lene ne pouȝ hond for this is ouȝ accorde
Let see now of pouȝ womanly pyte
He is a kyngtes brotheȝ sonne parde
And though he were a pouȝ bacheler

The knyghtes Tale

Sithen he hath serued you so many a yere
And hadde for you so grete aduersite
It must be considered leuyth me
For gentyl mercy ought to passe right
Than sayd he thus to palamon the knyght
I trow the 2 nedith litel sermounyng
To make you assent to this thing
Cometh nere and take your lady by the honde
And thus of them bothe was made the bond
That hight matromonye or mariage
By alle the counseyll of the baronage
And thus with alle blisse and melody
Hath palamon wedded Emely
And god that alle this worlde hath wrought
Sente him his loue that dere hadde bought
For now is palamon in al wele
Lpyng in blisse in richesse and in hele
And Emely him loueth so tenderly
And he her serneth agayn so gently
That ther was no worde them bitwene
Of jelousy or of any othez tene
Thus endith palamon and Emely
And god saue alle this company

Here endith the knyghtes tale
And here begynneth the myllers prologue

W Han that the knyght had thus his tale tolde
In alle the company nas there yong ne olde
That he ne sayd it was a noble story
And worthy to be drawe in memory
And namely the gentylles euerichone
Dure hoost lough and swoze so mot I gone

The Myllers Prologue

This goth aright vnboheled is the male
Let se now who shal tel another tale
For truly the game is wele begonne
Now telle ye sir monke if that ye honne
Som what to quyte the knyght his tale
The Myller that for drunken was al pale
To that vnnethe upon his horse he sat
He nolde auale nother hode ne hat
Ne abyde noman for his curtesy
But in pylates voyce he gan to cry
And swore by armes blode and bones
I can a noble tale for the nones
With whiche I wol now quyte the knyghtes tale
Dure hoost saw that he was dronke of ale
And sayde abyde Robyn leue brother
Som better man shal telle first another
Abyde and let us werke thyrstely
By cokkes soule quod he that nyl nat I
For I wil speke or elles go my wey
Dure hoost aunswerd telle on a deuyll wey
Thou art a fool thy wyt is ouercome
Now herkeneth quod the Myller alle and some
But first I make a protestacioun
That I am dronke I knowe by my soun
And therfore if I mys speke or sey
Wyte it the ale of Suthwerke I you pray
For I wol telle a legende and a lyf
Bothe of a carpenter and of his wyf
How that a clerke hath set the wrightes cappe
The reue aunswerd and sayd stynt thy clappe
Let be thy lewde dronkyn harlotrye
It is a synne and eke grete foly
To appeyre any man or him de fame

The Myllers Prologue

And eke bring wyues in suchē name
Thou mayst ynough of othez thinges sayn
This dronken Myllers spake ful sone ageyn
And sayd o leue brothez I wolde
Who hath no wif he is no cokecolde
But I say nat therfore that thou art one
There been gode wyues many one
Why art thou angry with my tale now
I haue a wif parde as wele as thou
yet nolde I nat for the oxe in my plow
Take vpon me more than ynow
As deme of my selue that I were one
I wol beleue wele that I am none
An husbonde shulde nat be inquisityf
Of goddes pruypte ne of his wif
So he may fynde goddes fuson there
Of the remenaunt nedith nat to enquire
What sholde I more say but this myllere
He nolde his wordes for no man forbere
But tolde his chowles tale in this manere
Me at thinketh that I shal reherse it here
And therfore every gentyl wight I pray
Demeth nat for goddes loue that I say
Of euylentent but that I must reherce
Thei tales al be they bettre or werce
Or elles falsen som of my mateze
And therfore who solystith nat to here
Turne ouer the leef and chese a nother tale
For he shal fynde ynow both grete and smale
Of historialle thing that tolceth gentylnesse
And eke moralite and holynesse
Blameth nat me if that ye chese amys
The Myllers is a chowle ye know wile this

The myllers Prologue

So is the reue and eke othez mo
And harlotrye they tolde bothe two
Aupseth you and put me oute of blame
And eke men shal nat make earnest of game

Here begynneth the myllers tale



Whilom thez was duelling in Wyenforde
A riche knyght that gystes hadde to boorde
And of his craft was he a carpentre
With him thez was a poure scolere
Had lerned art but al his fantesye
Was turned to lere astrologye
And coude a certayn of conclusiouns
To demyn by interzogaciouns
If that men asked him certeyn houres
Whether they shuld haue drought or shoures
Or if that men asked him what shulde befall
Of euery thing I may nat rehen alle

The Wyllers tale

This clerke was cleped hend nycolas
Of derne loue he coude and of solas
And thezto he was sly and ful pryue
And lyke a mayden meke for to see
A chambre hadde he in that hostelrye
Alone with oute any company
Ful fetou sly y dight with herbes sote
And he him selue was swete as is the rote
Of lycorice oz of any cete wale
His almege st his bokes grete and smale
His astrologye longyng for his arte
His augrym stones ley fayre a part
On shelues couched at his beddes hed
His presse y couered with a folding rede
And alle aboue thez lay a gay sawtrye
On whiche he made anyghtes melodye
So swetely that al the chambre rong
And Angelus ad virginem he song
And after that he song the kynges note
Ful often blissed was his mery throte
And this swete clerke his tyme spent
After his frendes syndyng and his rent
This carpentre hadde wedded new a wif
Whiche that he loued more than his lyf
Of xbiij yere she was of age
Jelous he was and held hez narrow in cage
For she was wyld and yong and he was olde
And demed him selue lyke to be a cokewolde
He knew nat caton for his wyf was rude
That hadde a man wed his symylitude
Men sholde wedde after thez estate
For youth and age been often at debate
But sithen he was fallen in the snare

The Apelles Tale

He must endure as other folke his care
fayre was his yong wif and ther withalle
as any wesel her body gent and smalle
a seynt she wered barred alle of silke
a barmecloth as white as morow mylke
Upon her lendes with fulle many a gore
white was her smoke and broden alle bifoze
And eke behinde on her coles aboute
Of co. eblake sylke within and eke withoute
The tapettes of her white bolupe
were of the same sute of the coles
Her fylet brode of silke and set ful hye
And siherly she hadde a likerous eye
ful finale y pulled were her browes two
And they were bent and blake as any sloo
She was moche more blissful on to se
Than is the newe pere genet tre
And softer than is the wolfe of the wuder
And by her gyrdel hangtth a purs of lede
Tarsalet with sicke and perked with lator
In alle this worlde to seke by and doun
There is noman so wise that coude thinche
So gay a pupelot or so praty a wynche
fulle brightez was she shynnyng of her hue
Than in the toure the noble forged new
But of her song it was as loude and perny
As any swalow sittynge in the beryn
Therto she coude skippe and make game
As any hydde or calf folowynge his dame
Her mouthe was swete as braget or meth
Di horde of apelles leyde on the hay or heth
Wynnyng she was as is a ioly colt
Long as a mast and by right as a boft

The Myllers Tale

A broche she bare upon her low coler
As brode as is the boos of a bohteler
Her shoen were laced on her legges hye
She was a prymerolle a pygges nye
For any lord to liggyn in his bed
Or yet for any gode yeman to wedde
Now spre and eft spre so beset the caas
That on a day this hend Nicholas
Spre with this yong wif to rage and to pley
Whyles that her husband was at Dseney
As clerkes be ful subtil and ful queynte
And pryuely he caught her by the queynte
And sayd ywys but if I haue my wille
For dery loue of the lemmyn I spyll
And held her hard by the shanke bones
And sayd lemmyn loue me alle at ones
Or I wol dye al so god me saue
And she sprong as a colt doth in the traue
And with her hede she wrieth fast a wey
She sayde I wol nat hyssle the by my fay
Why let be quod she let be Nicholas
Or I wol cry oute harrow and alas
Do wey your hondes for your curtesy
This Nicholas gan mercy for to cry
And spake so fayre and profered her so fast
That she her loue graunted him at the last
And swore her othe by seint Thomas of kent
That she wolde be at his comaundement
Whan that she may her leyse wele espye
My husband is so ful of iclouysye
That but ye wayte wele and be pryue
I wote right wele I nam but dede quod she
Ye must be ful dery as in this caas

The Myllers Tale

Nay therof care the nat quod Nicholas
Pytherp a clerke hath besed his while
But if he coude a Carpenter begyle
And thus they been accorded and y sworn
To wayte a tyme as I haue tolde biforn
Whan Nicholas hadde do thus euerydele
And thacked her aboute the lends wele
He kypte her swete and toke his sawtrye
And pleyed fast and made melodye
Than fel it thus that to the parisshe chirche
Cristes owyn werkes for to wyrche
This gode wif went on an holypday
Her forhede shone as bright as ony day
So was it wasshe whan she leet her werke
Now was of the chirche a parisshe clerke
The whiche that was y cleped Absolon
Crulled was his here and as the gorde it shone
And strutted as a fan large ant brode
Ful streight and eyn lay his iofy shode
His rode was rede his eyen gray as goos
With powles wyndowes coruen in his shoes
In hoses rede he went fulle fetouly
Y cladde he was ful smalle and fetouly
Alle in a hyrtel of a light waget
Ful fayre and thicke by the poyntes set
And therupon he hadde a gay surplice
As white as is the blossom on the ryse
A mery childe he was so god me saue
Wele coude he leten blode and clippe and shaue
And make a charter of lond and a quitaunce
In twenty maners coude he trippe and daunce
After the scole of Wyenford tho
And with his legges cast to and fro

The Myllers Tale

And pley songes on a smalle rebbyble
Therto he song somtyme a loude quynnyble
And as wele coude he pley on his gyttern
In alle the town nas brewe house no tauern
That he ne visited With his solace
There as any gayland tapster was
But soth to sey he was somdele shewymous
Of fartyng and of speche daungerous
This absolon that iolyf was and gay
Goth With a censoure on the holyday
Sensyng the wyues of the parysse fast
And many a louely loke on them he cast
And namely on this carpenters wyf
To loke on her him thought a mery lyf
She was so proppr swete and eke sytherous
I dar wele say if she hadde be a mous
And he a cat he wolde her hent anone
This parysse clerke this ioly absolon
Hath in his hert suche a loue longyng
That of no wif toke he non offryng
For curtesy he sayde he wolde non
The mone whan it was nyght bright shone
And absolon his gyttern hadde ȝ take
For paramours he thought for to wake
And forth he goth iolyf and amorous
Tyl he cam to the Carpenters house
Alitel after coches hadde y crowe
And dressed him by by the shot wyndowe
That was upon the Carpenters walle
He singith in his boyce gentyl and smalle
Now dere lady if thy wyl be
I pray yow that ye wil thinke on me
ful wele accordyng to his gytyrnyng

The Myllers Tale

This carpenter awoke and herde him sing
And spake vnto his wif and sayde anon
What alþson herist thou nat absolon
That chaunteth thus vndre oure boures walle
And she aunswerd her husbond therwith alle
yes god woot John I here it euerydele
This passith forth what wille ye but than wele
from day to day this ioly absolon
So wolweth hez that he is wo begoon
He wakith alle the nyght and alle the day
He kempt his lockes brode and made them gay
He wolweth her by meanes and brocage
And swore he wolde be hez own page
He syngeth broelpng as a nyghtyngale
He sent after pyment methe and spyced ale
And wafres pppng hote of the gleden
And for she was of toun he profered mede
for som folke wol bye women for richesse
And som for strokes and som for iolynesse
Som tyme he she with his lustynes and masterye
He pleyeth herodes spon a scaffolt hye
But what auayleth him as in this caas
So loued so this hend Nicholas
That absolon may blow the buches horn
He ne hadde for his laboure but a scorn
And thus she maketh of absolon her ape
And al his earnest turneth tyl a jape
ful soth is this prouerbe it is no lye
Men say right thus alwey the nyght slepe
Maketh the fer leef for to be lothe
for though that absolon be wood or wrothe
Bicause that he fer was from hez sight
This nyght Nicholas stode in his light

The Myllers Tale

Now here the wele thou hende Nicholas
For absolone may wayle and syng alas
And so befel it that on a saturday
This carpenter was goon tyl D seney
And eke hend Nicholas and alyson
Accorded be fully to this conclusioun
That Nicholas shal shapen hem a wyle
This self ielous husbond to begyle
And if so be the game went a right
She sholde slepe in his armes alle nyght
For this was her desire and his also
And right anone withoute wordes mo
This nycolas no longer wolde tary
But doth fulle soft in to his chambre carpe
Bothe mete and drinke for a day or twey
And to her husbond hadde her for to sey
If that he asked after Nicholas
She shold say she ny st where he was
Of alle that day she saw him nat with eye
She troweth that he is in som maladye
For that no crye her mayde coude him calle
He nolde aunswere for nothing myght falle
This passith forth alle the saturday
That nycolas styll in his chambre ley
And ete and slepe or dyd what him lyst
Tyl sonday that the sonne goth to rest
This self carpenter hath grete meruayle
Of nycolas or what myght him ayle
And sayd I am adradde by seynt Thomas
It stondith nat a right with Nicholas
God sheld it that he dyed sodenly
This worlde is now fulle tykel spherly
I sawe a corps to day boze to the chirche

The Apples Tale

That now on monday last I saue him wirthe
Go vp quod he vnto his knaue anone
Clepe at the doze and knoeke with a stone
Loke how it is and telle me boldely
This kuaue goth vp ful sturdely
And at the chambre doze while that he stode
He cryed and knoched as he were wood
What how what do ye master Nicholas
How may ye slepen al the long day
But alle for naught he herd nat a worde
An hool ful low he fond vpon a bord
There as the cat was wont in for to crepe
And at the hole he looked in ful depe
Tyl at the last he hadde of him a sight
This nycolas sat gaping euil vp right
As he hadde kyked on the new mone
Adoun he goth and tolde his master sone
In what aray he saue this ilke man
This carpenter to blisse him began
And sayd help vs seint frides wyde
A man wote lytel what him shal betyde
This man is fallen with his astronomy
In som woodnesse or in som agonye
I thought ay wele how it sholde be
Men sholde nat know of goddes pryuyte
Y blessed be alwey a lewde man
That naught vnt only his beleue can
So ferd another clerke with astronomy
He walked in the felde for to pryue
Vpon the sterres what ther sholde befall
Tyl he was in a marlepit y falle
He saue nat. But yet by seint Thomas
He re with fore of hend Nicholas

The Myllers Tale

He shalbe rated of his studipng
If that I may by iesu heuyn king
Gete me a staf that I may vnder spore
While that thou Robyn heupst of the doze
He shalle oute of his studipng as I gesse
And to the chambre doze he gan him dresse
His knaue was a strong chorle for the nones
And by the haspe he haf it bp at onys
In to the floze the doze fel anone
This nycolas sat ay as styll as stone
And euil gaped bp ward in the eyre
This carpentere wende that he were in dispeyre
And bent him by the shulders myghtyly
And shoke him harde and cryed spetously
What nycolay what how loke a down
Awake and thinke on cristes passioun
I crouche the fro clurs and fro wightes
Ther with the nyghtspel sayde he anone righes
On foure hatups on the house aboute
And on the thressholde of the doze withoute
Jesu crist and seint benedight
Blysse this house from euery Wicked Wight
For nyghtes berry the Wight pater noster
Where wonest thou seynt petrys sustre
And at the last this hende nycolas
Gan for to sigg sore and sayde allas
Shal alle this worlde be loste est sones now
This carpenters aunswerd what sayest thou
What thinke on god as we do men that swynke
This nycolas aunswerd fette me drynke
And after wil I speke to the in pryuate
Of certayn thinges that touchen me and the
Wil it telle none othez man certayn

The Myllers Tale

This carpentere goth down and cometh ageyn
And brought of myghty ale a large quarte
And when ech of them hadde dronke his part
This nycolas his doze faste shette
And down the carpenter be him he set
He sayd John myn hoost leef and dere
Thou shalt vpon thy trouthe swere me here
That to no wight thou shalt this counsel wrey
For it is cristes counseyll that I sey
And if thou telle it man thou art forsoze
For this vengeaunce thou shalt haue therfore
That if thou wrey it man thou shalt be wode
May crist forbede it for his very blode
Quod tho this sely man I am no blabbe
Ne though I say I am nat leef to gabbe
Say what thou wilt I shal it neuiz telle
To childe ne wif be him that harowed helle
Now John quod nycolas I wil nat lye
I haue founde it in myn astrologye
As I haue loked in the mone bright
That now a monday next a quartyz nyght
Shalle fal a rayn and that so wilde and wode
That half so grete was neuiz noes flode
This worlde he sayde in lesse than an houre
Shal alle be dreynt so hydous is the shoure
Thus shal mankynd drenche and lese thei lyf
This carpentere aunswerd allas my wyf
And shal she drenche allas my alifoun
For sorow of this he felle almoost a doun
And sayd is ther no remedy in this caas
Why yes for god quod hend Nycolas
If thou wilt worke after soze and rede
Thou mayst nat worke after thy own hede

The Myllers Tale

For thus sayeth Salamon that was ful trewe
Worke alle by counseyland thou shalt nat rewe
And if thou worke wylt by gode counseyll
I vndertake withouten mast or sayle
Yet shal I haue her and the and me
Hast thou nat herd how saued was Noe
Whan that oure lord hadde warned him biforn
That al the worlde with water sholde be loyn
Yes quod this carpentere ful yore ago
Thou hast nat herd quod nycolas also
The sorow of noe with his felawship
Or that he myght get his wif to ship
Him hadde beleue I dar wele vndertake
At that tyme than alle his wedders blake
That she had hadde a ship her selue alone
And therfore wotest thou what is best to done
This askest thou hast and of an hasty thing
Men may nat preche ne make taryng
Anon go get so fast into this inne
A knedding trough or elles a hymelyn
For eche of vs but loke that they be large
In whiche we may swymmen as in a barge
And haue therin bytaile suffisaunt
But for one day ty on the remanaunt
The water shal a flake and go a wey
Aboute pryme vpon the next day
But Robyn may nat wyt on this thy knaue
Ne eke thy mayden gylle I may nat saue
Aske nat why for though thou aske me
I wyl nat telle goddes pryuate
It suffiseth the but if thy wylt be madde
To haue as grete a grace as Noe hadde
Thy wif shal I wele saue oute of doute

The Myllers Tale

Go now thy wey and spede the here aboute
But whan thou hast for the and her and me
ygoten vs thies knedding tubbes thre
Than shalt thou hong them in the roof ful hye
That noman of oure purueaunce espye
And whan thou thus hast done as I haue seyde
And hast oure bytaye fayre in them yleyde
And eke an eye to smyte the corde atwo
Whan that the water cometh that we may go
And breke an hole an high vpon the gable
In to the gardeyn ward ouer the stable
That we may frely passe forth oure way
Whan that the grete shoure is passed a wey
Than shal we swymme as merely I vndertake
As doth the white doke after the drake
Than wol I clepe how alison how John
Be mery for the flode wil passe anone
And thou wilt sey hayle mayster Nicholas
Gode morow I se the wele for it is day
And than shal we be lordes alle oure lyue
Of alle the worlde as noe and his wif
But of o thing I warne the fulle right
Be wele auyssed on that ilke nyght
Whan we be entred into the shippe boord
That one of vs ne speke nat a word
Ne clepe ne cry but be in his prayez
For it is goddes owne hest dere
Thy wif and thou must hang fer a twynne
For that betwyt you tway shal be no synne
No more in lokyng than there shal in dede
This ordenaunce is sayde go god the spede
To morow at nyght when folke be alle a slepe
Into oure knedding tubbes wyl we crepe

The Myllers Tale

And sittyn there abyding goddes grace
Go now thy wey I haue no lenger space
To make of this no lenger sermonyng
Men say thus send the wise and say no thing
Thou art so wise it nedith the nat to teche
God saue our lyf and that I the besече
This sely carpentere goth forth his wey
ful ofte he sayd alas and wela wey
But to his wif he tolde his pryuyte
And she was ware and knewe it bet than he
What alle this queynt cast was for to sey
But nathelesse she ferd as she wolde dey
And sayd alas go forth thy wey anone
Help vs to scape oz we be dede echoon
I am thy true berry wedded wif
Go dere spouse and helpe to saue oure lyf
To whiche a gret thing is affection
Men may dye alday of ymaginacion
So depe may impressioun be take
This sely carpentere begynneth quake
Him thinketh verily that he may se
Nores flode come walowing as the see
To drenchen alisoun his hony dere
He wepith waleth and maketh sorp there
He syghed with may a sorp swough
He goth and getteth him a knedding trougth
And after that a tub and a kemlyn
And pr puely he sent them to his Inne
And hange them in the rose in prpuete
His own hond he made ladders thre
To clymbyn by the rentes and the stalkes
In to the tubbes hanging in the balkes
And then bitapleth both trougth and tubbe

The Myllers Tale

With brede and cheese and gode ale in a Jub
Suffisynge right ynow as for one day
But or he hadde made alle that araye
He sent his knave and eke his wenche also
Upon his erond to london for to go
And on the monday whan it drew to nyght
He shytted his doore withoute candel light
And dressed al thing as it sholde be
And shortly by theyr comyn alle thre
They sytten stylle wele a furlong wey
Now pater noster cum sayd Nicholay
And cum sayde John and cum sayd alyson
This carpentre sayd his deuocioun
And styll he sittyth and byddith his praye
Awaiting on the rayn if he it here
The dede sleepe for wery besynesse
Fyl on this Carpenter right as ygesse
Aboute cursue tyme or lytel more
For trauayl of his goost he troneth sore
And eft he rowtyth for his hede mys lay
Down of the ledde staketh nicholay
And Alisoun ful soft down she spedde
Withoute wordes mo they go to the bedde
There as the carpenter was wont to lye
There was the reuel and the melodye
And thus lieth alison and Nicholas
In besynesse of myrth and in solas
Tyl that the belle of laudes gan to ryng
And freres in the chauncel gan to syng
This parisshe clerke this amorous Absolon
That is for loue alwey so wo begon
Upon the monday was at Dseney
With company him to disporte and pley

The Myllers Tale

And asked upon a caas a clopsterer
Ful pryncely after Johan the Carpenter
And he drew him a parte oute of the chirche
And sayde I not I saw him nat wythe
Sithen saturday I trow that he be went
For tymber there our abbot hath him sent
For he is wont for tymber for to go
And duelle at the graunge a day or two
Drille as he is at his house certeyn
Wher that he be I can nat sothly sayn
This absoloun ful ioly was and light
And thought now is tyme to wake al nyght
For spkerly I saw him nat stering
Aboute his doore sithen day gan to spring
So moot I thryue I shalle or coches crowe
Pryncely knocken at his wyndow
That stont ful row upon his houres wal
To Alisoun now wil I tellen alle
My loue longyng for yet I shal nat mys
That at the leest wey I shal her kyss
Som maner comferte shal I haue parsay
My mouthe hath itched alle the long day
That is a signe of kyssyng at the leest
Al nyght che me mette I was at a feest
Therefore I wyl go slepe anoure or twey
And alle the nyght than wil I walke and pley
Whan that the first coche hath crowe ano
Wyriseth this ioly loue absoloun
And him arrapeth gay at poynt deuyse
But first he che with grayn and procyce
To smellen swete or he hadde kempt his here
Vndre his tong a true loue he bere
For therby went he to haue be gracious

The Myllers Tale

He cometh to the Carpenters house
And styl he stont vndre the shot Wyndow
Vnto his brest it raught it was so low
And soft he colweth With a sempoun
What do ye honycombe swete alpsoun
My fayre byrde my suete syna mome
Awaketh lemman myn and speke tome
Ful lytel thinke ye vpon my wo
That for your loue I swete there I go
No wondre is though I swelt and swete
I morne as doth a lambe after the tete
Myss lemman I haue suche loue longynge
That lyke a turtyl true is my moznynge
I may nat ete no more than a mayde
Go fro the Wyndow iache fool she sayde
As helpe me god it wol nat be com bame
I loue a nother and elles I were to blame
Wele bet than the by Jesu absolone
Go forth thy wey or I wil throwe a stone
And let me slepe a t wenty deupl way
Alas quod absolon and wele a wey
That true loue was euiz so euyl beset
Than hyssse me sithen it may be no bet
For iesus loue and for the loue of me
Wylt thou than go thy wey ther with quod she
Ye certis lemman quod this absolon
Than make the redy quod she I come anone
And vnto Nicholas she sayde stylle
Now pease and thou shalt laugh thy fylle
This absolon down set him on his knees
And sayde I am a lord at alle degrees
For after this I hope ther cometh more
Lemman thy grace and swete byrd thyn ore

The Wynders Tale

The Wyndowes she bndoth and that in hast
Haue do quod she com and spede the fast
Lest that oure nyghbours the aspye
This absolon gan wpye his mouth fulle dry
Derke was the nyght as pyche or cool
And at the Wyndow she put oute her hole
And absolon ne felt ne bet ne wers
But with his mouth he kyst her ers
Inlle sauerly or he were ware of this
A bak he stert and thought it was a mys
For wele wist he a woman hadde no berd
He felt a thing alle rough and long hered
And sayd fy allas what haue I do
Tere quod she and clapped the Wyndow to
And absolon goth forth a soyr paas
A berd a berd sayde hend Nicholas
By goddes corpus this goth fayre and welc
This sely absolon herd euery dele
And on his lippe he gan for angre byte
And to him selue he sayde I shal the quyte
Who rubbyth now who frotyth now his lippes
With dust With cloth With sond With chippes
But absolon that sayeth ful ofte allas
My soule betake I sayde he to sathanas
But me leuyr and alle this toun quod he
On this despyte a broken for to be
Alas quod he allas that I ne hadde blent
His hote loue was colde and alle queynt
For fro that tyme that he hadde kyst her ars
Of paramours set he nat a carse
For he was heled of his maladye
And oft paramours gan he diffye
And wept as doth a childe that is bete

The Wyllers Tale

a soft paas he went him ouer the strete
Vnto a symyth men called dane gerueys
That in his forge symytheth plow harneys
He sharpyth the share and the cultre besyde
This absolow knocketh alle easely
And sayd vnto geruays and that anon
What who art thou. it am I absolow
What absolow what cristes swete tre
Why ryse ye so rathe. ey benedicite
What apleth you som gay gyrl god it woot
Hath brought you thus vpon the verytote
By seynt Note ye wote what I mene
This absolow roughit nat a bene
Of alle this pley apen no word he yaf
He hadde wele more thought on his distaf
Than geruays knewe and seyd frend so dere
That hote cultre in the chymney here
As lene it me I haue therewith to done
I wol bringe it the ageyn fulle sone
Geruays aunswerd certys were it golde
Or in a poke nobles alle vntolde
Thou sholdest it haue as I am true symyth
Ey cristes fote what wol ye do therewith
Therefore quod absolow be as he may
I shalle it telle the to morow or day
And caught the cultre by the colde stele
Fulle softe oute of the doze he gan stele
And wente vnto the carpenters walle
He cougthed first and knocketh therewith alle
Vpon the wyndow right as he dyd ere
This alpsoun aunswerd who is there
That knockith so I warraunt it a theef
Why nay quod he god wote my swete leef

The Myllers Tale

I am absoloun thy nown derling
Of golde quod he I haue the brought a ryng
My moder yaued it me so god me saue
Fulle fyne it is and therto wile y graue
This wyl I gyue the if thou me kysse
This Nicholas was ryse for to pisse
And thought he wolde amende alle the iape
He sholde kysse his ers or that he scape
And by the wyndow dyd he hastely
And oute his ers he putyth pruely
Duez the buttoche of the shanke bone
And therwith spake this clerke absoloun
Speke swete byrde I not where thou art
This Nicholas anone let fle a fart
As grete as it hadde been a thondre dynt
That with the stroke he was almoost y blynt
And he was redy with his iron hote
And nycolas amyd the ers he smote
Of goth the shynne an hande brede aboute
The hote cultre brende so his tonte
And for the smert he wend for to dye
As he were wode for wo he gan to crye
Help water water help for goddes hert
This carpentere oute of his slombre stert
And herd one cry water as he were wode
And thought allas now cometh the flode
He set him by withoute wordes mo
And with his aye he smote the corde a two
And down goth alle he fonde neyther to selle
Ne brede ne ale tyl he cam to the selle
Upon the floze and there as woun he lay
By stert bez alyson and nycolape
And cryed oute harow in the strete

The Myllers Tale

The nyghboures both smale and grete
In ronnyng for to galwryn on this man
That yet a soun lay both pale and wan
For with the falle brost he hath his arme
But stonde he must vnto his owen harme
For whan he spake he was anon boyn down
With hende nycolas and alisoun
They tolde euery man that he was wode
So he was agast of noes stood
Throughe fantaspe and of his vanyte
He hadde bought him knedding tubbes thre
And hadde them hanged in the roof aboue
And that he prayed them for goddes loue
To sitten in the roof par company
The folke gan laughen at his fanteisy
In to the roof they lpyhyn and they gape
And turned alle his harm to a iape
For whatso euir this carpenter answered
It was for naught noman his reson herd
With othes grete he was swoze a doun
That he was holde wode in alle the toun
For euery clerke right anon helde with othez
They sayd the man was wode my leef brothez
And euery wight gan laugh at his stryf
Thus swpyued was the carpenters wif
For alle his heppng and alle his ielousy
And absolon hath lpyssed her neyther eye
And nycolas is scalded in the route
This tale is done and god saue alle the route

Here endith the Myllers Tale
And here begynneth the reues prologue

The Reues Prologue

W When folke hadde laughten at this nyce caas
Of absolon and of hende nycolas
Dyuerse folke diuersely thy sayden
But for the more part they lough and pleyden
Ne at this tale I sawe noman him greue
But if it were only Of walde the Reue
Bicause he was of carpenters craft
A lytel Ire ther is in his hert there last
He gan to grutche and blame it a lyte
By the quod he ful wele I coude the quyte
With blerping of a proude myllers eye
If that me lyst to speke of rebaudrye
But I am olde me lyst nat pley for age
Gras tyme is done my fodre is now forage
This white top writeth my olde yeres
My hert also moulyd is as my here is
But yet I fare as doth an open ers
For that ilke frute is euez lengre the wers
Tyl it be rotyn in mulloke or in stre
We olde men I drede so faren we
Tyl we be rotyn can we nat be rype
We hopen alwey while the worlde wil pype
For in oure wille ther stekith euir a nayle
To haue an hore hede and a grene tayle
As hath a leche for though oure myght be gone
Dure wil desireth folp euir in one
For when we may do naught than wille we speken
yet in oure assen olde fyre is richyn
Foure gledes haue we whiche I shalle denyse
Auauntynge liyng angre and couetyse
These foure sparkles longith vnto elde
Dure olde lymes may we nat be welde
But wil ne shal nat fayle that is soth

The Reues Prologue

And yet I haue alwey a coltes tothe
As many a yere as it was passed hene
Sithen that my tappe of lyf began to renne
For spherly whan I was born anone
Deth drew the tappe of lyf and lete it gone
And euiz sithen hath so the tappe ronne
Tyl that almoost al empty is the tonne
The streame of lyf now droppeth on the chymbe
The sely tunge may wele ryng and chymbe
Of wrechidnesse that past is ful pore
With olde folke saue dotage there is no more
Whan that oure hoost hadde herd this sermonyng
He gan to speken as lordly as a king
And sayd what amounteth al this wytte
What shal we speke al day of holy writte
The deupl made a Reue for to preche
Of a soudre a shipman or a leche
Say forth thy tale and tary nat the tyme
To depford and it is half wey to pryue
To grene wiche that many a shrewe is in
It were alle tyme thy tale for to begynne
Now sires quod this Ds Walde the Reue
I pray you alle that ye you nat greue
Though that I aunswere and some dile sette his how
For lefulle is with force of shou
This dronken myler hath tolde vs here
How that begyled was a carpentere
Parauenture in scorn for that I am one
And by your leue I shalle him quyte auone
Right in his choles termys wyte I speke
I pray to god his necke may to breke
He can wele in myn eye se a stalke
But in his owne eye he can nat se a balke

The Reunes Tale

Here endith the Reunes prologue
And here begynneth his Tale



a T tromppyn ton nat fer from cambrige
There goth a broke and our that a bryte
Upon the whiche broke ther stonte a mylle
And this is berry soth that I you telle
A myller was there duefling many a day
As any pecke he was proude and gay
Pyper he coude and spyshe and nettys bete
And turne cuppes and wele wrastyl and shete
And by his belt he bare along pauad
And of a swerd fulle trenchant was the blade
A ioly popper bare he in his pouche
There was no man for peryll durst him touche
A sheffeld thwetyl bare he in his hose
Rounde was his face and camosed was his nose
Also pyllid as an ape was his sculle

The Kernes Tale

He was a market bettre at the fulle
Ther durst no wight hand spon him ledge
That he ne swore anone he sholde abedde
A theif he was for sothe of corn and mele
And that a sligh and bsaunt for to stele
His name was y hote deynus Symkyn
A wif he hadde y come of noble kynne
The parson of the toun her fadre was
With her he pas many a panne of brasse
For that Symkyn shulde in his blode alye
She was y fostred in a nonrpe
For Symkyn wolde no wyf as he sayd
But if she were wele y noyrshed and a mayde
To saue his estate of yemanrpe
And she was proude and pert as a pye
A fulle fayre sight was spon them two
An holyday bifoze her wolde he go
With his tepet ybounde aboute his hede
And she cam after in a gytte of rede
And Symkyn hadde hosen of the same
Ther durst no wight clepe her but dame
Was none so hardy that went by the wey
That with her durst ones rage or pley
But if he wolde be slayn of Symkyn
With pauade or with knyf or bodekyn
For jelous folke been parlous euil mo
Al gates they wolde theyz wyues wenden so
And eke also for she was somdele smotyrliche
She was as digne as water in a dicke
And ful of hocouz and of bismare
Her thought a lady sholde her spare
What for her kynred and her noytrpe
That she hadde lezned in the nonrpe

The Reues Tale

A doughter hadde they bitwix them two
Of twenty yere withoute any moo
Saupng a childe that was of half yere age
In cradyl it lay and was a proppr page
This wenche thicke and wele y growe was
With camops nose and eyen grey as glas
Buttohes brode and brestes rounde and hye
But right fayre was hez here I wil nat lye
The parson of the town for she was faire
In purpos was to make her his heyre
Bothe of his catel and of his messuage
And straunge he made it of hez mariatge
His purpos was for to bestowe hez hye
Vnto som worthy blode of auncetry
For holy chirche godes must be spende
On holy chirche blode that is descended
Therfore he wolde his holy blode honoure
Though that he holy chirche shulde deuoure
Grete solyn hath this myller oute of doute
With whete and malt of alle the lond aboute
And namely ther was a grete college
Men clepith it the soles halle in Cambridge
There was theire whete & the theire malt y ground
And on a day it happed in a stounde
Seek lay the manciple on a maladye
Men wende wisely that he shulde dye
fro whom this myller stale bothe mele and corn
An hundred tyme more than he dyd biforn
For there bifore he stale but curtesy
But now he was a thief outrageous
For whiche the wardyn chidde and made fare
But therof set the myller nat a tare
He craked host and swore it was nat so

The Reues Tale

Than were there yong scolers two
That duelden in this halle of whiche I sey
Testys they were and lusty for to pley
And only for their myrth and reualrye
Upon the warden besyly they cry
To geue them leue but a lytel stounde
To go to the mylle and se their corne y grounde
And hardely they durst ley their necke
The myller sholde nat stele half a pecke
Of corn by slepyght ne by force them reue
And at the last the wardyn gaue them leue
John byght that one and aleyh byght that othez
Of a toun were they born that byght strodre
Fre in the north I can nat telle where
This aleyh makith redy alle his gere
And on an horse the sacres he cast anone
Forth goth aleyh the clerke and eke John
With gode swerde and bocker by his syde
John knewe the wey him nedith no gyde
And at the mylle the sakes adoun he leyeth
Aleyh spake first alhayle symond in feyth
How farys thy fayre doughter and thy wyf
Aleyh welcom quod Symkyn by my lyf
And John also how now what do ye here
Symond quod John nede hath no pere
Him must nedes serue him selue that hath no swayn
Or elles he is a fole as clerkes seyn
Dure manciple I hope he wille be dede
So workith ay there wantys in his hede
And therfore I am come and this aleyh
To grynde oure corn and cary it home aleyh
I pray you spede vs hens in that ye may
It shalbe do quod Symkyn by my fay

The Kernes Tale

What wil ye do whiles it is in honde
By god right by the hopper wille I stonde
Quod John and se hou the corn goth in
yet sa I neuiz by my fader kyn
How the hopper wagges to and fro
Acyng aunsward John wilt thou so
Than wil I be byneth by my croun
And se hou the mele fallith down
In to the trough shalbe my disporthe
For John in feyth I may be of your sorte
I am as euyl a myller as been ye
This myller smyled of thei nycpte
And thought alle this is done but for a wyle
They wene that noman may them begyle
But by my thrift yet shalke I blere thei eye
For alle thei sight and thei re philosophy
The more queynt crakes that they make
The more shalke I stele whan I take
In stede of floure yet wil I gyue them bren
The gretest clerkes be nat the wisest men
As whi om to the wolf thus spake the mare
Of alle thei art ne count I nat a tare
Dute of the doze he goth fulle pryuely
Whan that he sa we his tyme softly
He lukith vp and down tyl he hath founde
These clerkes horse where he stode y bounde
Behinde the mylle vndre a lee f selle
And to the horse he goth faire and wel
He stripith of the bydel right anone
And whan the horse was loos he gan to gone
Toward the fenne where wilde marys renne
Forth with wey through thicke and thynne
This myller goth aye no worde he sayde

The Reues Tale

But doth his note and with the clerkes played
Tyl that theire corn was faire and wele grounde
And whan the mele is sacked and y bounde
This John goth forth and spnt his horse a wey
And gan to cpe harow and wele a wey
Dure horse is loost aleyne by cockes bones
Step on thy feet come of man alle at ones
Allas oure wardeyn hath his palfrey lozne
This aleyne al forgot both mele and corn
Alle was oute of mynde his husbondrye
What whiche wey is he gone he gan cpe
The wif come rennyng in warde at a renne
She sayd allas your horse goth to fenne
With wilde marys as fast as he may go
Unthanke come on his honde that bonde him so
And he that better sholde haue knytte the reyne
Allas quod John allas for cristes peyne
Ley down thy swerde and I wille myn also
I am fulle swyfte god wote as is a roo
By cockes soule he shal nat a scape vs bathe
Why ne hadde thou put the caple in the lath
Alle hayle be god aleyne thou art a fonne
These sely clerkes haue wele fast y ronne
Toward the fenne both aleyne and eke John
And whan the myller saw they were agoon
He half a bussel of theire floure hath take
And badde his wif go knedde it in a cake
He sayde I trowe the clerkes were a ferde
yet can a myller make a clerkes berd
For alle theire art yet let them go thire wey
So where they goon so lette the children pley
They gette him naught so lightly by my crown
These sely clerkes rennyng by and down

The Reues Tale

With kepe kepe stond stonde Jossa iossa ware derere
Go whpstyle thou there and I shalle kepe him here
But shortly tyl it was berply nyght
They coude nat though they dyd alle theire myght
They 2 cappl cache they ran alwey so fast
Tyl in a dicke they caught him at the last
Wery and weet as best is in the rayn
Comyth John the clerke and with him aleyne
Allas quod John the day that I was born
Now are we dryuen tyl hethyn and tyl scoyn
Dure corn is stole men wille vs foules calle
Both the wardeyn and our felowes alle
And namely the myller wel a wey
Thus pleyneyth John as he goth by the way
Toward the mylle and bayerd in his honde
The myller sptyng by the spre he sonde
For it was nyght and ferther myght they naught
But for the loue of god they him besought
Of herborough and of ease as for theire peny
The myller sayde aye if ther be any
Suche as it is yet shalle ye haue poure part
My house is stretyt but ye haue lernyd art
Ye can by argumentes maken a place
A myle brode of twenty foot of space
Let se now if this place wol suffice
Or make it romer with speche as is poure gyse
Now symond sayd this John by seint cutlerd
Ay art thou mery and that is wel aunsward
I haue herd say men shal take of two thynges
Suche as he fyndes or suche as he bzynges
But specially I pray the hoost so dere
Gette vs som mete and drinke and make vs chere
And we wol pay truly at the fulle

The Kene Tale

With empty hondes men may nat ha whes tulle
To here my spluez redy for to spende
This Myller to the toun his doughter sende
For ale and Brede and rosted them a goos
And bond theire horse he sholde no more go loos
And in his owyn chambre he made a bidde
With shetys and with chalons faire y spreadde
Nat from his owyn bedde ten fote or twelue
His doughter hadde a bedde al by her selue
Right in the same chambre by and by
It myght be no bet and cause why
Ther was no rome herborow in the place
They soupen and speken them of solace
And dronken euir strong ale at the beste
Aboute mydnyght went they to reste
Wele hath this Myller bernysshed his hede
Fulle pale he was for dronke and nat rede
He yevith and he spekith through the nose
As he were in the quache or in the pose
To bedde he goth and with him goth his wif
As any Jay was slyght and iolyf
So was her ioly whystyl wele y wette
The cradyl at her beddes feet was sette
To roken and to peue the childe souke
And whan that dawhyn was in the crolwe
To bedde went the doughter right anone
To bedde went aleyn and also John
There nas no more thez nedith them no dwale
This Myller hath so wysely byhbed ale
That as an horse he snorteth and sleepe
Ne of his tayle behinde he tooke no kepe
His wif bare him a burdon fulle strong
Men myght here routyng therin a furlong

The Kenes Tale

The wenche rowted the paz company
Alep the clerke that hard this melody
He poked John and sayde slepest thou
Hardyst thou euiz suche a song or now
So whiche a coplyng is at wene them alle
A wylde fyre vpon theiz bodies falle
Who herde euiz suche a farly thyng
ye they shal haue the floure of alle euyl endyng
This long nyght thez tyd me no rest
But yet no force alle shalbe for the best
For John sayde alep so mot I thryue
If that I may pon wynche wyl I swyue
Some easement hath la we shapen vs
For John ther is a la we that sepeith thus
That if a man in one thing be aggrened
That in a nothez he shalbe releuyd
Dure corn is stole sothly it is no nay
And we haue hadde an euyl fyt to day
And sithen I shal haue non amendement
Agayns my losse I wylle haue easement
By coches soule it shal none othez be
This John aunswerd alep aurse the
This mylke is a parious man he sayde
And if that he oute of his siepe abraide
He myght do vs bothe a bylong
Alep aunswerd I count him naught a fly
And by he roose and by the wenche he crept
This wenche lay by right and fast slept
Tyl he so nyght was or she myght aspy
That it hadde be to late for to crye
And shortly for to telle they were at one
Now pley alep for I wyl speke of John
This John lieth styllie a furlong way or two

The Reue Tale

And to him selue he made reuthe and wo
allas quod he this is a wicked iape
Now may I say that I am but an ape
yet hath my felawe somwhat for his harme
He hath the myllers doughter in his arme
He antred him and hath his nedys spedde
And I ly as a draf sake in my bedde
And whan this iape is tolde a nother day
I shal be holde a daffe a cokney
I wyl aryse and auntre it by my fayth
Unhardy is himself thus men seyth
And by he roos and softly he went
Vnto the cradyl and in his arm it hent
And bare it soft vnto his beddes fete
Sone after the wif her routyng leet
And gan a wake and went her oute to pyss
And cam ageyn and gan her cradel myss
And groped here and there but she fonde none
allas quod she I hadde almoost mys gone
I hadde almoost goon to the clerkes bedde
By benedicite than hadde I foule spedde
And forth she went tyl she the cradyl fond
She gropith alwey forther with her hond
And fonde the bedde and thought but gode
Bycause that the cradyl by it stode
And nyest where she was for it was derke
And fayre and wele she crept vnto the clerke
And lieth ful styll and wold haue caught a slepe
Within a while this John by sleep
And on this gode wif he leyeth on soze
So mery a fytte ne hadde she yore
He pryched hard and soze as he were madde
This ioly lyf haue thies two clerkes ladde

The Reuers Tale

Tyl that the thridde roche began to synge
Aseyn weyt wery in the dawnyng
For he had swynken alle the long nyght
And sayd fare wele malyn swete wight
The day is com I may no longer byde
yet enir more where so I go or ryde
I am thyn owen clerke so haue I the
Now dere lemman quod she go fare wele
But or thou go o thing I wyl the telle
When that thou Wendest homward by the mylle
Right at the entre of the doze behynde
Thou shalt a cake of half a busselle synde
That was made of thyn owne mele
Whiche that I holped my spre for to stele
And gode lemman god the same and kepe
And with that worde almoost she gan to wepe
Aseyn byrist and thought or that it daw
I wille go crepe in by my fela we
And fond the cradyl with his hond anone
Be god thought he alle wrong haue I gone
My hede is toty of my swynke to nyght
That makith me that I go nat a right
I wote wele by the cradyl I haue mysgoo
Here lieth the myller and his wif also
And forth he goth a t wenty deupl way
In to the bed there the myller ley
He wend haue copen in by his fela w John
And by the myller in he crept anone
And caught him by the necke and soft spake
He sayde thou John thou swyneshede a wake
For cristes soule and here a noble game
For by that lord that called is seynt Jame
As I haue thries in this shorte nyght

The Reues Tale

Swyued the myllers doughter bolt by right
 Whiles thou hast as a colwarde be agast
 ye false harlot quod the myller hast
 A fals traytoure fals clerke quod he
 Thou shalt be dede by goddes dignyte
 Who durst be so bolde to disperage
 My doughter that is of suche kynage
 And by the throte bolle he caught aleyne
 And he hent him dispitously agayne
 And on the nose he smote him with his fyst
 Down ran the bloody streme by on his brest
 And in the floze with nose and mouth to broke
 They walowed as pigges doon in the poke
 And by they gone and down agayne anone
 Tyl that the myller sporned at a stone
 And down he felle bak ward on his wif
 That wist no thing of this nyce stryf
 For she was falle a sleep a lytel wight
 With John the clerke that wached had al nyght
 And with the falle oute of her stepe the brayde
 Help holy croos of bromehome she sayde
 In manus tuas to the lord I calle
 Awake symond the fende is on me falle
 My hert is broken help I am but dede
 There lieth one on my wombe and on my hede
 Help Symkyn for the fals clerkes fight
 This John stert by as fast as he myght
 And groped by the walles to and fro
 To fynde a staf and she stert by also
 And knewe the esters bet than dyd this John
 And by the walle a staf she toke anone
 And sawe a lytel shymeryng of a light
 For at an hole in shone the mone bright

The Reues Tale

And by that light she sawe them bothe two
But spherly she nyxt who was who
And as she saw a white thing in her eye
And whan she can this white thing aspye
She wende the clerke hadde wered a bolupere
And with the staf she drewe ay nere and nere
And haue hyt this aleyn at the fulle
And smote the myller on the pylde scul
And down he goth and cryed hazow I dye
The clerkes bete him wele and leet him lye
And dressed them and toke their horse anone
And eke their mele and on their wey they gone
And at the mylle doze yit they toke their cake
Of half a bussel floure wele y bake
Thus is the proude myller wele y bete
And hath y lost the gryndyng of the whete
And payed for the souper euerydele
Of aleyn and of John that bete him wele
His wif is swyued and his doughter als
So such it is a myller to be fals
And therto this prouerbe is sayde fulle soth
Him dare nat wene wele that euyl doth
A gyfrouz shalke him selue begyled be
And god that sytteth high in mageste
Saue al this company grete and smale
Thus haue I quyte the myller in my tale

Here endyth the Reues tale

And here begynneth the Coles prologue

¶ He Cooke of london while the reue spake
For ioye he thought he clawd him on the bake

The nTokes Prologue

a ha quod he for cristes own passioun
This myllere hath a sharpe conclusioun
Upon his argument of her begatte
Wele soth sayde Salamon in his langage
Ne bringe nat euery man in thy house
For herbouryng by nyght is parlous
Wele ough t a man auy sed for to be
Whom that he bring into his pryuytpe
I pray to god to geue me sorow and care
If euir sithen I hight hodge of ware
Herd I myllers bet y set a werke
He hadde a iape of malice in the derke
But goddes forbode that we styntyn here
And therfore if ye wouchsauf to here
A tale of me that am a poure man
I wol pou telle as wele as I can
A lytel iape that felle in oure cyte
Dure hoost aunswerd and sayde I graunt it the
Now telle on Rogez loke that it be gode
For many a pasty hast thou let blode
And many a iache of douny hast thou solde
That hadde been twyes hote and twyes colde
Of many a pylgrame hast thou cristes curse
For of thy persely pet fare they the wers
That they haue eten with the stubbed goos
For in thy shoppe is many a flepe loos
Nowe telle on gentyl Rogez be thy name
But I pray the be nat wrothe for game
A man may say fulle sothe in game and play
Thou sayst soth quod Rogez by my say
But soth pley quade pley as the flemyng sayth
And therfore harry bally by thy sayth
Be thou nat wroth or we departen here

The Cokes Tale

Though that my tale be of an hostyllere
But neuirthelesse I wyl nat telle it yet
But oz we departe I wis thou shalt be quytte
And ther withalle he lough and made chere
And seyd his tale as ye shal after here

Here endith the Cokes prologue
And begynneth his Tale



¶ Prentyes whilom duelt in oure cyte
Of craft of bytallers was he
As gayland he was as golde fynche in the shawe
Broun as a bery a propre short fela we
With lockes y hempt ful fetously
Daunce he coude wele and iolyly
Than he was cleyed parhyn reueloure
He was as fulle of loue and paramoure
As in the hyue fulle of hony swete

The n Cokes Tale

Wele was the wenche that with him myght slepe
And at euery brydale wolde he synge and hoppe
And loned bettyr the nethiz ende than the shoppe
For when ther any rydynge was in chepe
Dute of the shoppe thider wolde he lepe
Tyl that he hadde alle the sight yseyn
And daunsed wele he wolde nat come aye
And gadred him a menpe of his sorte
To hoppe and synge and make suche disporte
And there they set steuene for to mete
To pleyen at the dysse in suche a strete
For in the toun was there no prentyse
That sayrez coude cast a peyre of dysse
Than Dazhyn coude and therto he was fre
Of his dispence in place of pryuate
That fonde his maystere wele in his chaffare
For of tyme he fonde his boy ful bare
For shortly a prentyce that is a reueloure
That hauntith dyce riotte and paramoure
His mayster shalke it in his shoppe aby
Al haue he no parte of the mynstral spe
For thift and riotte they been conuertible
Al can he pley on getern or rebble
Reuel and trouthe as in a low degree
They be fulke wrothe alday as men may se
This ioly prentyce with his maystere stode
Tyl he was nigh oute of his prentyshode
Al were he synbbed bothe a rely and late
And sumtyme ledde with reuel to Newgate
But at the last his mayster him bethought
Whan on a day whan he his papez sought
Upon a prouerbe that sayeth this same worde
Wile bet is rotyen apul oute of horde

The Tokes Tale

Than that he roten alle the remanaunt
So farith it by a riottous seruaunt
It is ful lasse harme to let him passe
Than he sholde alle the seruauntes in the place
Therefore his mayster gaue him a quyttaunce
And bad him go with sorowe and myschaunce
And thus this ioly prentyce hadde his leue
Now let him riotte alle the nyght or leue
And there is no thief withouten a sowhe
That helpith him to waste and to sowhe
Of that he brybe can or borow may
Anone he sent his bedde and his arraye
Vnto a compere of his owne sorte
That loueth dyce ryotte and disporte
And hadde a wyf that helde for contenaunce
A shoppe and swyued for her sustenaunce

Here endith the Tokes Tale
And begynneth the man of lawes prologue

O Dre hoost sa we wele that by the bright sonne
The azke of his artificialle day is ronne
The fourthe part and half an oure and more
And though he were nat depest stert in soze
He wist wele it was the xiiii day
Of aprylle that is messangere to may
And sa we wele that the shadowe of euery tre
Was as in length of the same quantyte
That was the body erecte that caused it
And therefore by the shadowe he toke his witte
That phebus whiche that shone so clere and bright
Degrees was ybclomben on hight
And for that day as in latitude

The Man of Lawes prologue

It was ten of the cloke he gan conclude
And sodenly he plight his horse aboute
Lordinges quod he I warne you alle the route
The fourth part of this day is gone
Now for the loue of god and seint John
Lese no tyme as ferforth as ye may
Lordinges the tyme wastith bothe nyght and day
And stelith fro vs what pryuely slepyng
And what thurgh negligence in oure walkyng
As doth the streme that turneth neuiz agayn
Descending fro the monteyn into the prayn
Wele can senequye and many a philosophe
Be waylen tyme more than gorde in cofre
For losse of catel may recouered be
But losse of tyme shendyth vs quod he
It wil nat come aye withouten drede
Nomoze than wil malhyns madynhede
Whan that she hath in her wauntone sse
Let vs nat mo welyn thus in Idelnesse
I pre man of law quod he so haue ye blisse
Tel vs a tale anone as for ward is
Ye be submytted thurgh youre fre assent
To stond in this case to my Juggement
Acquyte you now of youre beheest
Than haue ye do youre deuoure at the leest
Hoost quod he depardieu ye assent
To breke for ward it is nat myn entent
Behest is dette and I wolde holde sayn
Alle my beheest I can no better sayn
For suche lawe as man geuyth an othez wight
He shulde him selue vse it by right
Thus wol oure text but neuir thelesse certayne
I can right now no thrifty tale seyn

The Man of lawes prologue

Than Chaucer though he can but lewdey
On metres or on rymyng craftely
Hath sayd them in suche englysshe as he can
Of olde tymes as knowith many a man
And if he ne hath nat sayde them leue brotther
In one boke he hath sayde them in one othez
For he hath tolde of louers by and down
Mo than Dyd made of mencioin
In his epistelles that been fulle olde
What sholde I telle them sithen they be tolde
In youthe he made of Teyns of alcion
And sith he hath spoken of euerichon
These noble wyues and thies noble iouers the
Who so that wol his large volume seke
Clepyd the sayntes wyues of cupyde
There may he se the large woundes wyde
Of Lurresse and of babylone tyssby
The swerde of dydo for the fals Ene
The tre of philles for her demophon
The playnte of dyanere and of hermeon
Of adryane and eke of psiphile
The barzephyle stondyng in the see
The dreynt liandre for her erzo
The terys of Elyne and eke the wo
Of Briseyde and of Lacedomea
The cruelte of the quene medea
The lyzel children hanging by the halfe
For thy Jason that was of loue so false
Pyrrmystra penelope and alceste
poure wysshode comendyng with the best
But certaynly no worde writth he
Of that wicked ensample of Canace
That loued her owne brotther synfully

The man of lawes prologue

Of whiche cursed stories I say fy
Dreles of Tyrus appolonius
How that the cursed king Antiochus
Beraft his doughter of her madynhede
That is so horrible a tale for to rede
Whan he her thre w bpon the paue ment
And therfore he fulle of auysement
Wolde neuiz write in none of his sermons
Of suche vnkinde abhomynacions
Ne I wil nat reherse if that I may
But of my tale what shurde I doo this day
Me were fullle lothe be lykened doutles
To myses that men clepe pperides
Methamorphoseos wote what I mene
But neuirthelesse I reck nat a bene
Though I com after him with haue we bake
I speke in prose and let him rymes make
And with that worde he with a sobre chere
Beggan his tale as ye shalle after here

Here endith the man of lawes prologe
And here begynneth his tale



The man of lawes Tale .

O Hatefulle harme condic ion of pouert
With thrist colde and hungere soze confounded
To asken helpe the shameth in thygh hert
If thou none aske With nede art thou wounded
That berry nede bn wrappith al thy woundes hid
Maggre thygh hede thou must for indigence
Or stele or begge or borowe thygh dispence
Thou blampst crist and sayest fulle bitterly
He mysdeparteth riches temporalle
Thy nyghboure thou witest sinfully
And sayest thou hast to lye and he hath alle
Parfay sayest thou somtyme he rekyn shalle
Whan that his tayle shal Brenne in the gleden
For he nat helpith the nedefulle in their nede
Herke what is the sentence of the wise
Bet is to dpen than to haue indigence
Thy selue nyghbouz wol the despyse
If thou be poure faze wele thy reuerence
yet of the wiseman take this sentence
That alle the daies of poure men been wiche
Beware therof or thou com to the pryke
If thou be poure thy broder hatyth the
And alle thy frendes fle fro the alas
O riche marchauntes fulle of wele ye be
O noble o prudent folke as in this caas
your bagges be nat fylled With ambes aas
But With syre synne that rennyth in your chaunce
At cristemasse mery may ye daunce
ye schyn lond and see for your wynnynghes
And as wise folke ye knowe alle the state
Of reignes. ye been faders of tydinges
And tales bothe of pease and of debate
I were ryght now of a tale desolate

The man of lawes Tale

Nere that a marchaunte gone is many a pere
He taught a tale the whiche that ye shalle here

i A surry whilom duelt a company

Of chapmen riche and therto sadde and trewe
That wyde were senten their spyce
Clothes of golde and satyn riche of hewe
Their chaffare was so trusty and so newe
That every wight hath deynte to chaffare
With them and eke to sellen them their ware

Now fel it that the maysters of the sorte
Haue shapen them to Rome for to wende
Were it for chapmanhede or for disporte
None othez messagge wolde they thider send
But cam their selue to Rome this is the ende
And in suche place as thought them auantage
For their entent they taken their herbytage

So ioined haue thise marchauntes in that toun
A certayn tyme as fyl for their plesaunce
But so bifyl that the excellent renoun
Of the Emperours doughter dame constance
Reported was with every circumstaunce
Vnto thise surziens marchauntes in suche wise
Fro day to day as I shalle you deuyse

This was the comen voyce of every man
Dure Emperoure of Rome god him se
A doughter hath that sith the worlde began
To reken as wele her goodnesse as her beaute
Was neuiz suche a nother as was she
I pray to god in honoure her susteyne
And wolde she were of alle euope the quene

In her is high beaute withoute pryde
Pouthe withoute gref or folpe
To alle her werkes vertue is her gyde

The man of lawes Tale

Humblenesse hath slayne in hez al tyrannye

She is a myrroure of alle curtesye

Hez hert is veryp chambre of holynesse

Hez hond mynyster of freedom for almesse

And alle this boys is soth as god is trewe

But now to purpos let be turne agayn

Thise marchantes haue do fraught thez shippes new

And whan they haue the blisful madp seyn

Home to surry been they went agayn

And done theire nedes as they haue do pore

And spuen in wele I can say nomore

Now fylit that these marchauntes stode in grace

Of him that was the sowden of surrye

For whan that they cam fro any straunge place

He wolde him selue of his benygne curtesy

Make them gode chere and besily aspye

Tydinges of sondry realmes for to here

The wondres that they myght se or here

Amonge othez thinges specialy

The marchauntes haue tolde of dame Custaunce

So grete noblenesse in earnest seriously

That this sowdan hath caught so grete plesaunce

To haue hez figure in his remembraunce

That alle his lnt and alle his besy cure

Was for to loue hez whiles that his lyf may dure

Parauenture in that large boke

Whiche men clepe the heuyn y writte was

With sterres or that he his birth toke

That he for loue shulde haue his dethe alas

For in the sterres clerez than is the glas

As writen god wote who so coude it rede

The dethe of euery man withouten drede

In sterres many a wynter there biforn

The man of lawes Tale

was write the deth of hector and achilles
Of pompey Iulys oz they were born
The stryf of Thebes and of hercules
Of Sampson Turnus and socrates
The deth. But mennys wyttes be so dulle
That no wight can rede it at the fulle

This sowdan for his pryue counseyl sent
And shortly on this matere for to passe
He hath to them declared his entent
and sayd them certeyn but he myght haue grace
To haue Custaunce within a lytel space
He nas but dede and charged them on hye
To shape for him som remedy

Dyuerse men dyuerse thinges sayden
They argumentes casten bp and down
Many a subtel reson forth they layden
They spake of magyke and abusoun
And fynally as in that conclusioun
They can nat se in that none auantage
Ne by none othez wey saue in mariage

Than sawe they there in suche difficulte
By way of reson to speke alle playn
Bicause that ther was suche dyuersite
Bitwyt theire both lawes that they sayn
They trowe that no cristen prynce wolde fayne
Wedden his childe vndre oure lawes swete
That vs was taught by mahound the prophete

And he aunswered them rather than I lese
Custaunce I wil be cristened doutles
I moot be herys I may none other chese
I pray you holde youre argumentes in pease
Saueth my lyf and be nat rechelesse
To getyn her that hath my lyf in cure

The man of lawes Tale

For in this woo I may nat long endure

What nedith grete dylatacioun

I say by trespise and embassetrye

And by the popes mediacioun

And alle the chirche and alle the cheualrye

That in distrinction of maumentrye

And in encesse of cristes lawe deze

They been accorded so as ye shalle here

How that the folowen and his baronage

And alle his lieges shulde cristened be

And he shal haue Custaunce in mariage

And certayn golde I not what quantite

And therto founde they sufficient surete

The same accorde was sworn in either spde

Now faire custaunce almyghty god the gyde

Now wolde som men wene as I gesse

That I sholde telle alle the purueaunce

That the Emperour of his grete noblenesse

Hath shapen for his doughtere dame custaunce

Wele may men know that so grete ordenaunce

May noman telle in a lytel clause

As was arayed for so high a cause

Bisshoppes been shapen with her for to wende

Lordes ladies knyghtes of grete renoun

And othez folke ynough this is the ende

And notyfied is oute though the town

That every wight with grete deuocioun

Sholde praye crist that he this mariage

Resceue in grete and spede this biage

The day is com of her departyng

I say the wofulle day fatale is come

That there may be no lengtez tarinyng

But for ward they dresse them alle and som

The man of La Wess Tale

Custaunce that was with sorow alle ouircom
fulle pale ariseth and dressith her to wende
for wele she wote there is none othez ende

allas what wondre it is though she wept
that shal be sent to straunge nacioun
fro frendes that her so tenderly kept
and to be bounde vndre subiectioun
Of one she knowith nat the condicioun
husbondes been alle gode and haue be pore
that knowe wyues I dar say nomore

fadre she sayde thy wretched childe custaunce
thy pong doughterz fostred by so soft
and ye my modre my souerayn plesauce
Duez alle thing oute take crist on losfe
Custaunce poure childe her recomaundeth ofte
vnto your grace for I shalle to Surrye
Ne shalle I neuiz see you more with eye

allas vnto the barbarpke nacioun
I must anone sithen that it is your wille
But crist that dyed oure redempcio un
So geue me grace his bestys to fulfille
I wretched woman no force though I spylle
women are born to thraldom and penaunce
and to be vndre mannys gouernaunce

I trolwe at trope whan turnus brake the walle
Of Ilion nor brent was Thebes the cyte
Ne at Rome for the harme through Hanyballe
that Romayns hadde benquysshed tymes thre
Nas herd suche tendre wepyng for pyte
as was the chambre for her departyng
But forth she mot whether she wepe or syng

Of first mouyng cruel firmaruent
with thy dyurnalle swegh that crowdest alle

The man of lawes Tale

And hurtliste al fro E st to occident
That naturally wolde holde another wey
Thy croudyng set the heupn in suche array
At the begynnyng of this fiers biage
That cruel mars hath slayn this mariage
 D infor tuuat ascendaunt toztuous
Of whiche the lord is helples falle alas
Dute of his angle into the thridde house
D mars o occita sez as in this caas
D feble mone vnhappy be thy paas
Thou knettyst the where thou art nat rescyued
There thou were wele fro thens art thou wepyd
 Imprudent Emperouze of Rome alias
Was there no philosophre in thy toun
Is no tyme better than a nother in this caas
Of biages is there none election
Namely to folke of high condicioun
Nat whan a rote is of a birthe y knowe
Alas we been to lewde and thus to slow
 To shippe is brought this woful fayre mayde
Solempnel y with euer y circumstance
Now Jesu crist be with you alle she sayde
There is no more but fare wele fayre custaunce
She peyneth her self to make gode contaunce
And forth let her sayle in this manere
Any turne apyn I wille to my matere
 The moder of the solway welke of bices
Aspyed hath her sonnys playn entent
Howe he wolde lete his olde sacrifices
And right anone she for her counseyll sent
And they cam to knowe what she ment
And whan assembled was this folke in fere
She sette her down and sayd as ye shalle here

The Man of Lawes Tale

Cordinges quod she pe knowe wele euerichone
How that my sonne is in poynte for tolete
The holy Lawes of oure alcazon
yeuen by goddes messangere machomete
But on a volbe to the grete god I hete
The lyf shal be rather oute of my body stert
Or machometes lawe go oute of my hert

What shuld vs tyden of this newe lawe
But thraldom to oure body and penaunce
And after ward in helle to be draue
for we reuelwed mahoun oure creaunce
But lordes wil ye make assuraunce
As I shal say assentynge to my loze
And I shal make vs sauf for euer more

They sworn and assentyd eueri man
To lyue with her and dye and by her stonde
And eueriche in the best wise that he can
To strengith her shal his frendes fonde
As she that hath this empryse take on honde
Whiche ye shal here as I shal deuyse
And to them alle she spake in this wise

We shal first fayne cristendome to take
Colde water ne shal vs greue but a lyte
And I shal suche a fest and a reuel make
That as I trowe I shal the soldan quyte
for though his wif be cristened neuiz so white
She shal haue nede to washe away the rede
Though she a fonte fulle of water with her lede

O soldannes rote of iniquite
Dirago thou samarian the seconde
O serpent vndre femenyngte
p lyke vnto the serpent depe in helle y bounde
O feyned woman alle that may confounde

The Man of Lawes Tale

Vertue and Innocence through thy malice
y bred is in the as nest of euery vyce

¶ Satan enuyous sithen that day
That thou were chased from oure heritage
Wele knowest thou to women the olde wey
Thou madest eua to bring vs in seruage
Thou wolde furdone this cristen mariage
Thyn instrument so wele a wey the while
Makyst thou of women whan thou wilt bettylle

This soldonesse whom I blame and wary
lete pryuelly her counseyl go theiſ wey
What shulde I lenger in this tale tary

She rideth to the soldan on a day
And sayd to him that she wolde renye her lay
And cristendome of prestes honde fonge
Repentyng her that she hethen was solongte

Beseching him to do her that honoure
That she myght haue the cristen folke to seeſt
To pleaseſ them I wil do my labour
The soldan sayeth I wil do at poure hest
And kneling thankid her of that request
So glade he was he nyſt what to say

She kyssed her sonne and home she goth her way

Argued be these cristen folke to lond
In sutyſe with a grette ſolempne route
And hastely this soldan sent his sonde
First to his moder and to alle the reigne aboute
And sayde his wif was come withoute doute
And prayed her to ryde ayens the quene
The honour of his reigne to susteyne

¶ Grete was the prees and riche was the arraye
Of surzpens and of Romaynes mete in fere
The modre of the soldan riche and gay

The Man of Lawes Tale

Resceyued hez With alle glade chere
As any modre myght hez doughter dere
And to the next cyte there besyde
A soft paas solempnely thy ryde

Nat trowe I the tryumphe of Julius
On whiche that Lucan makith suche a boost
Was rpallere ne moze curious
Than was the assemble of this blissful hoost
But this scozpyon this wicked goost
The solwdonnesse for alle hez fratering
Cast vndre this ful mortally to styng

The solwdan cometh him selue sone after this
So rially that wondre was to telle
And welcometh hez With ioye and blys
And thus in ioy and blisse Iete them duelle
The frute of euery tale for to telle
Men thought it whan tyme cam for the best
That reuel to stynt and men to go to rest

The tyme cam this olde solwdonnesse
Ordeyned hath this feste of whiche I tolde
And to the feste cristen men dresse
In generalle bothe yong and olde
There may men riactye and fest beholde
And depntes mo than I can deuyse
But alie to dere they bought it or they ryse

D soden woo that euez art successoure
To worldy blys spreynt With bitternesse
The ende of ioye and oure worldy laboure
Wo occupieth the fyne of oure gladnesse
Herthyn this counsel for thy sphernesse
Upon thy gladd day haue in thy mynde
The vnwaaz woo that cometh the behinde
For shortly to telle at one worde

The Man of lawes Tale

The sowdan and the cristen euerichone
Been alle to he Wynn and styched at the bord
But it were only dame Custaunce allone
This olde salwdonne sse cursed crone
Hath with hez frendes there done this cursed dede
For she hez selue wolde alle the countre lede

Ne there was surreyn none that was conuerted
That of the counseyl of the sowdan wote
That he nas alle to he Wynn oz he astertyd
And Custaunce haue taken anone fote hote
And in a shippe sterles god it wote
They haue hez set and hadde hez lerne to sayle
Dute of surry ageynward into ptaile

A certayn tresoure that she thidre ledde
And soth to sayn bytaile grete plente
They haue hez yue and clothes eke she hadde
And forth she sayled into the salt see

O my custaunce fulle of benygnyte
O Emperours pong doughter dere
He that is lorde ouer for:une be thy stere

She blissed hez and with ful pytous voyce
Vnto the crose of cryst thus sayd she
O clere o welefulle a tre holy croyce
Rede of the lambes blode fulle of pyte
That wesseth the worlde fro olde iniquite
Me fro the seende and fro his clawes hepe
That day that I shal drenche in the depe

Victoryous tre of protection trewe
That only were worthy for to bere
The kint of heyn with his woundes newe
The white lambe that hurt was with a spere
Stemmer of seendes oute of him and of here
Of whiche thy lynes saythfully extende

The Man of Lawes Tale

Ope hepe and yeue me my lyf tamende
peres and daies fleet this creature
Throughe oute the se of greke into the strayte
Of marroke as it was hez auenture
O many a sozpy mele may she bapte
After hez deth ful ofte may she wayte
Or that the wilde waues wolde hez dryue
Vnto the place where she myght aryue

Men myght aske why she was nat slayne
Eke at the feest who myght hez body saue
And I aunswerd to that demaunde agayne
Who saued danyel in the horrible caue
There euery wight were he mayster or knaue
Was with the yowyn fret or he a stert
No wight but god that she bare in hez hert

God lyst to shewe his wonderfulle myracle
In hez for we shulde see his myghty werkes
Crist that is of enery harme tryacle
By certayn meanes as knowen clerkes
Doth thinges that for certayn ende fulle derke is
To mannyss wytte that for oure ignorance
Ne can nat knowe his prudent purueaunce

Now sith that she nas at the feest y slaue
Who kept hez fro drenchyn in the see
Who kept Jonas in the fysshes maue
Tyl he was spouted oute of mynyue
Wele may men knawe it was no wight but he
That kept the peple hebrayche fro drenching
With dry fote oute throughe the se see passing

Who hath the foure spirytes of the tempeste
That powez haue to nopen londe and see
Both north and south west and est
Anopeth nether lond house ne tre

The May of Lawes Tale

Sothly the comaundre of that was he
That fro the tempest ay the woman kept
As wele whan she woke as whan she slept
Where myght this woman mete or drynke haue
Thre yere and more lastith her wytayle
Who fedde the egipcian mary in the caue
Dr in deserte nat but crist sauns fayle
Fyue thousand folke it was as grete meruayle
With louys fyue and fysshes to fede
God sent his soun at her grete nede
She dryueth forth into oure occian
Through oute oure wilde see tyl at the last
Vndre an holde that name I ne can
Fez in northumberland the walwes her cast
And in the sond the shippe styched so fast
That thens wolde it nat al that tyde
The wil of crist was there she shulde abyde
The constable of the castel down is fare
To se this wrache and alle the shippe he sought
And fonde this wepy woman ful of care
He fonde also the tresoure that she bought
In her langage mercy she besought
The lyf oute her body for to twynne
Her to delpyer oute of the wo that she was in
A maner latyn corrupt was her speche
But al gates therby was she vnderstonde
The constable whan him lyst no lengere seche
This woful woman brought he to londe
She knelith down and thankith cristes sonde
But what she was she wolde to noman say
For foule ne fayre though she sholde dye
She sayde she was so mased in the see
That she forgate her mynde by her trouthe

The Man of Lawes Tale

The constable hath of her so grette pyte
And eke his wif that weppyn soze for routh
She was so diligent withouten slowthe
To serue and please eueriche in that place
That al her loue that lokeh in her face

The constable and dame hermetgylde his wif
Were paynems and that countre euery where
But hermetgylde loued her right as her lyf
and custaunce hath so long y soiozned there
In oryson with many a byttre tere
Tyl Iesus hath conuerted through his grace
Dame hermetgylde the constablesse of that place

In alle that londe no cristen durst route
Alle cristen men be fledde fro that countre
Through paynems that conquered alle aboute
The reame as wele by land as by see
To Wales than fledde the cristianyte
Of olde Britons dwelling in that Ile
Ther was no refute for the meane while

But yet nere cristen Britones sone exiled
That there nare som in her prpueite
Honoured crist and he then folke bettyled
And nyght the castel suche there duelled thre
That one of them was blynde and myght nat se
But it were with thicke eyen of his mynde
With whiche they seen after men be blynde

Bright was the sonne as in a somers day
For whiche the constable and his wif also
And Custaunce hath take the right wey
Toward the see a furlong wey or two
To pleyen and to romen to and fro
And in this walke the blynde man they mette
Croked and olde with eyen fast y shette

The May of lawes Tale

In the name of crist cried this Brytoun
Dame harmegylde prue me me my sight aye
This lady wayt afrayed of that soun
Lest that her husband shortly for to seyn
Wolde her for iesus cristes loze haue slayn
Tyl custaunce made her bolde and bad her wirche
The wyl of crist as doughter of holy chirche

The constable weyt abasshed of that sight
And sayd what amounteth alle this fare
Custaunce aunswerd sir it is cristes myght
That helpith folke oute of the feendes snare
And so fer forth she can oure lawe declare
That she the constable or it were eue
Conuertyd hath and on crist made him beleue

This constable was nothing lord of this place
Of whiche I spake there he custaunce fonde
But kept it strongly many a wynters space
Vndre Alla king of al northumberland
That was fulle wise and hardy of his hond
Aynst the Scottes as men may wele here
But turue agayn I wil to my matere

Sathan that euer bz wayteth to begyle
Sa we of custaunce alle the perfection
And cast anone how he myght quyte her while
And made a yong knyght duelling in that toune
Loue her so hote of foule affection
That berply him thought he shalle spyl
But he of her onys myght haue his wylle

He wol with her but it auayleth naught
She wolde do no synne by no wey
And for despyte he compassed in his thought
To make her on a shameful deth to dye
He wayteth whan the constable is a wey

The man of lawes Tale

And pryvely on a nyght he crept
In hermetgylde's chambre whyles she slepte
Wery for waked in her orp sons
Slepith hermetgylde and custaunce also
This knyght through sathans temptacions
Alle softly is to the bedde y goo
And kytte the throte of hermetgylde a two
And leyde the bloody knyght by dame custaunce
And went his wey ther god gyue him myschaunce

Sone after cometh the constable agayn
And eke Alla that was king of the lond
And sawe his wif dyspytously slayne
For whom he wept and wronge his honde
And in the bedde the bloody knyf he fonde
By dame custaunce alas what myght she say
For very wo her witte was alle a wey

To king Alla was tolde alle this myschaunce
And the tyme and where and eke the wise
That in a schippe was founde this custaunce
As here bifoze ye may haue herd deuyse
The kinges hert of pyte gan aryse
Whan he sawe the benygne creature
Falle in disese and in mysaventure

For as the lambe toward his deth is brought
So stant this innocent afore the king
This fals knyght that hath this treson wrought
Berith her on honde she hath the do this thing
But nathelesse there was grete moornyng
Among the peple and sayden they can nat gesse
That hadde nat do so grete a wickednesse

For they haue seen her euil so vertuous
And lounyng hermetgylde right as her lyf
Of this bare witnesse eueryche in that house

The man of lawes Tale

Saue that he slowe hermettyld with the knyf
This gentyl king hath caught a grete motyf
Of this witnesse and though he wolde enquire
Deppere in this caas and trouthe for to leze
Alas custaunce thou hast no champpon
Ne syght canst thou nat wele a way
But he that starf for oure redemption
Bond sathan and yet lieth there he lay
He be the stronge champion this day
For but if crist open myracle by the
Withoute gyft thou shalt be slayne as swythe

She sette hez doune on hez knees & thus she sayde
Immortalle god that sauedest susanne
Fro fals blame and thou merciful mayde
Mary I mene doughter of seint Anne
Bifore whose childe angeles synge osanne
If I be gyltes of this felonye
My socoure be or elles I shalle dye

Haue ye nat sumtyme a pale face
Amonge a prees of him that hath been ladde
Toward his deeth where he gettith no grace
And suche a colour in his face he hadde
Men myght knowe his face that was be stadde
Amonge al the faces in that route

So standith custaunce and loketh hez aboute

Quenes lpyng whilom in prosperyte
Duchesses and the ladies euerichone
Haue som routhe on thei aduersite
An emperours doughter stant alone
She wote nat to whom to make her mone
A blode ypalles that stondith in this drede
Hez been thy frendes at thy grete nede

This Alla king hath suche compassion

The man of lawes Tale

A gentyl herte is fulfilled of pyte
That from his eyen ran the water doune
Now hastely go fet a boke quod he
And if this knyght wol swere that she
Hath thes woman slayne yet wol we be anyse
Whom that we wol shalbe oure iustice

A breton boke writen with euangelies
Was fet and thereon she swoore anone
She gylty was and in the meane whyles
An honde him smote upon the necke bone
That down he fyl at ones as a stone
And both his eyen brest oute of his face
In sight of euery body in that place

A boyce was herd in genezalle audience
And sayde thou hast disclaundred gyltles
The doughter of holy chirche in high presence
Thus hast thou done and yete I holde my pees
Of this mervayle agast was al the prees
As mased folke they stonden euerichone
For drede of wreche saue custaunce alone

Grete was the drede and eke the repentaunce
Of them that hadde wronge suspicion
Upon this sely Innocent instaunce
And for this myracle in conclusioun
And by custaunce mediacioun
The king and many another in that place
Conuerted was thanked be cristes grace

This fals knyght was slayne for his vntrouthe
By iugement of the king Alla hastely
And yet hath Custaunce of his deth grete routhe
And after this iesus of his mercy
Made Alla to wedden ful solempnely
This holy mayden that is so bright and shene

The man of lawes Tale

And thus hath crist made Custaunce a quene

But who was wofulle if I shalle nat lye
Of this weddyng but dongelde and no mo
The kinges modre ful of tyrannye

Her thought her cursed hert brast a two
She nolde nat her sonne had do soo
Her thought a despyte that he sholde take
So straunge a creature vnto his make

We lyst nat of the chaf ne of the stre
Make so long a tale as of the corn
What shulde I telle of the ryalte

Of this mariage oz whiche cours goth bifore
Who blowith in a trompe oz who in a horn
The frute of euery tale is for to seyn

They ete and drinke daunce syng and pley

They go to bedde as it is shyple and right
For though that wyues be ful holy thinges
They must take in pacient a nyght

Suche maner necessities as been plesinges
To folke that haue wedded them with ringes
And ley a lytel theire holynesse a syde

As for the tyme it may none othez betyde

On her he begate a man childe anone
And to a bisschop and to his constable eke
He toke his wif to kepe when he is gone

To Scotland ward his fomen for to seke
Now faire Custaunce that is so humble and meke
Solong is gone with childe in that styll

She kept her chambre abyding goddes wil

The tyme is come a man childe she bere
Mauricius at the fontstone they him calle
This constable doth forth come a messangere
And wrote vnto this kinge that cleped was alle

The man of lawes Tale

How that this blisfulle tydynge is befall
And othez thinge whiche was neddfulle to say
He takith his lettre and forth he goth his wey

This messangere to do his auantage
Vnto the kinges modre rideth he swythe
And salueth her fapre in his langage
Madame quod he ye may be glade and blithe
And thanken god an hundreth thousand sythe
My lady the quene hath childe withouten doute
To ioye and blisse of alle the reigne aboute

Lo here the lettres sealed of this thing
That I must here in alle the hast I may
If ye wyl ought to poure son the king
I am youre seruaunt both nyght and day
Donnegeld aunswerd as now at this tyme nay
But here alle nyght I wille thou take thy rest
Tomorrow I wil say the what me lyst

This messangere drank he sadly ale and wyne
And stolen were his lettres pryuelly
Dute of his boy whiles he slept as a swyne
And countrefeted was fulle subtely
A nother letere wrought ful synfully
Vnto the king directed of this matere
fro his constable as ye may after here

The lettre spake the quene delpyered was
Of so horrible a feendly creature
That in the castel none so hardy was
There no while any wight may endure
The modre was an elphe by auenture
y comen by charmes oz by socery
And euery wight hatith her company

Wo was the king whan he this lettre hadde seyn
But to no wight he tolde his sorowes soze

The man of lawes Tale

But of his owen hond he wrote agayn
Welcom the sonde of criste for euir moze
To me that am newelerned in this loze
Forde Welcom be thy lust and thy plesaunce
My lust I put alle in thy ordenaunce

Kepe this childe alle be it foule oz fayre
And eke my wif bnto my home comyng
Criste whan him tyst may sende me an eyre
More aggreable than this to my lyking
This lettre he sealith pryuelly wepyng
Whiche to the messangere was y take sone
And forth he goth there is nomore to done

A messangere fulfpylled with dronknes
Straunge is thy breth thy lymes flaternyng
And thou be wrethest alle secretenesse
Thy mynde is loze thou iangelyst as a Jay
Thy face is turned as in a newe aray
There dronknesse reigneth in any route
There is no counseyle kept it is no doute

A donegelde I haue none englysshe digne
Vnto thy malice and thy tyrannyng
And therfore to the feeude I the resigne
Let him endityn of thy traytourz
Iy manysshe Iy onay by god I lye
Iy feendly spyrite for I dare wele telle
Thougth thou here walke thy spyrite is in helle

This messangere cometh fro the king agayn
And at the kinges moders courte he light
And she was of this messangere fulle fayne
And pleased him in alle that euer she myght
He dronke and wele his gyrdyl bndre pyght
He slepith and he snozteth in his gypse
Al nyght tyl the son gan aryse

The man of lawes Tale

after was his lettres stolen euerichone
and countrefeted lettres in this wise
The king comaundith his constable anone
Up peyn of hanging and on high Iuyse
That he ne shulde suffer in no wise
Custaunce in his reigne for to abyde
Thre daies and a quarter of a tyde

But in the same shippe as he her sonde
her and her yong sonne and alle her gere
he sholde put and croude fro the londe
and charge her that she come neuiz est there
O my Custaunce wele may thy goost haue fere
and slepen in thy dreame by penaunce
Whan donegelde castith alle this ordenaunce

This messangere on morowe whan he woke
vnto the castelle holdith the next way
and vnto the Constable he the lettres toke
and whan that he this pytous lettre sape
fulle often he sayde alas and wele a wey
lord crist quod he hou may this worlde endure
so fulle of synne is many a creature

O myghty god if that it be thy wille
Sithen thou art rightfulle iuge hou may it be
that thou wil suffre Innocence to sprille
and wicked folke reigne in prosperite
O gode Custaunce alas so wo is me
that I moot be thy turmentoure or elles deye
On shamefulle deth there is none of her wey

Weppyn bothe olde and yong in that place
whan that the king this cursed lettre sent
and Custaunce with a dedely pale face
The wey toward the shippe she went
But neuirthelesse she takith in gode entent

The man of lawes Tale

The Wyl of criste and kneling on the strond
She sayde ay Welcome be thy sonde

He that me kept fro the fals blame
Whiles that I was in the londe amonges pou
He can me kepe fro harme and eke fro shame
In the salt see al though ye see nat hou
As stronge as euir he was he is yet now
In him I trust and in his moder deere

That is to me my sayle and eke my stere

Her lytel childe lay wepyng in her arme
And kneling pytously to him she sayde
Dease lytel childe I wil do the none harme
With that the kyrchief from her hede she Brayde
And ouer his lytel eyen she it layed
And in her arme she lullith it fulle fast
And into heuyn hy her eyen she cast

Moder quod she and mayde bright Marye
Soth is that through womannes egement
Manhynde was loost and dampned euir to dye
For whiche thy childe was on the croce to rent
Thy blissful eyen sawe al this turment
Than is there no comparison bitwene
Thyn wo and any wo that man may susteyne

Thou sawest thy childe slayn afore thyn eyen
And yet now lyueth my lytel childe parfay
Now lady bright to whom alle fulle crien
Thou glorie of womanhode thou fayre may
Thou haupn of refute bright sterre of day
Releue on my childe that of thy gentylnesse
Releue on euery reful in distresse

O lytel childe alas what is thy gylt
That neuir wroughtest synne as yet parde
Why Wyl thy harde fadre haue the spyt

The Man of Lawes Tale

O mercy and dere constable quod she
As let my lytel childe duelle here with the
And if thou darst nat saue him for blame
So kysse him onys in his faders name

Ther with she loked backward to the londe
And sayde fare wele husbond routhlesse
And by she rose and walked down the stronde
Toward her shippe her folowith alle the prees
And euer she prayeth her childe to holde his pease
And takith her leue with an holy entent
She blissith her and into ship she went

Wp tyled was the shippe it is no drede
Habundantly for her long space
And othez necessaries that sholde nede
She hadde ynough heried by goddes grace
For wynde and weddre almyghty god purchase
And bring her home I can no better seyn
But in the see she dryueth forth the wey

a Fla the king cometh sone after this

Unto his castel of whiche I tolde
And asked where his wif and his childe is
The constable gan aboute his hert to colde
And pleyntly alle the mane he him tolde
As ye haue herd I can it telle no better
And she with the kinges seale and his lettre

And sayde lord as ye comaunded me
On peyne of dethe so haue I do certayn
This messangere turmentyd was tyl he
Must be knowe and tel plat and playn
fro nyght to nyght what place he hadde in layne
And thus he with subtel enquerynge
Imagyned was by whom this harme gan spring
The honde was knowen that the lettre wrote

The Man of lawes Tale

And alle the benyn of this cursed dede
But in what wise certaynly I not
The effecte is this that Alla oute of drede
His modre slough that men may playnly rede
For that she traytoure was to her ligeaunce
Thus endith olde donegylde with my schaunce

The sorowe that this Alla nyght and day
Makith for his wif and for his chyldre also
There is no tonge that it telle may

But now we wol I to custaunce go
That fletyth in the see with peyne and wo
Fyue yere and more as lynch cristes sonde
Or that her shippe approached to any londe
Vndre an hethen castel at the last

The whiche the name nat in text I fynde
Custaunce and eke her chyldre the see by cast
Almyghty god that saued alle man kynde
Haue on custaunce and her chyldre som mynde
That fallen is in hethen honde est sone

In poynte to spyll as I shalle telle you sone

Down from the castel cometh there many a wyght
To gauryn on this shippe and on custaunce
But shortly fro the castel on a nyght

The lordes steward god yeue him my schaunce
A theef that hadde renyed oure creaunce

Cam into the shippe alone and sayde he sholde

Her lemman be whether she wolde or nolde

Tho was this wretchid woman wo begone

Her chyldre cryed and she cried pytously

But blissed mary helped her right anone

For with her strongyng wele and myghtyly

The thief fel ouer the borde al sodenly

And in the see he dreynt for vengeaunce

The Man of Lawes Tale

And thus hath crist vnwemmed kept custaunce

O foule lust of luxurie lo thynde
Nat only that thou sayntest mannys mynde
But verely thou wylt his body shende
The ende of thy werke oz of thy lustes blynde
Is compleynyng hou many one may men fynde
That nat for werke somtyme but for thentent
To do this synne be othez slayne oz shent

Howe may this werk woman haue that strengith
Her to defende apenst the renegate
O golias vnmesurable of lengithe
How myght dauid make the so mate
So ying of armure and so desolate
How durst he loke vpon thy face
Wele may men see it is but goddes grace

Who paue iudith corage oz hardynesse
To slee him olifernes in his tent
And to deliueryn oute of wretchednesse
The people of god I say to this entent
That right as god spryte and vigoure sent
To them and saued them oute of myschaunce
So sent he strengith and vigoure vnto custaunce

Forth goth her ship through oute the narowe mouthe
Of iubalter and septe dryuynge alwey
Sometyme west and sometyme north and southe
And sometyme Est ful many a wey day
Thyl cristes modre y blessed be she aye
Hath shapen through her endlesse godenesse
To make an ende of alle her heynnesse

Now let vs stynt of custaunce but a throwe
And speke we of Romayns the emperoure
That oute of Surry hath by lettres knowe
The slaughtez of cristen folke and dishonoure

The Man of Lawes Tale

Doon vnto his doughter by a fals traytoure
I mene the cursed and wicked sowdone
That at the feest leet she bothe more and lesse
For whiche this Emperour hath sent anone
His senatoure with ryalle ordenaunce
And othere lordes god wote many one
On surryns to take hight vengeance
They brynne and slee & bring them to myschaunce
Ful many a day but shortly this is the ende
Homward to Rome they shapen them to wende
This senatoure repareth with victorie
To Rome ward sealing fulle ryally
And mette the ship dryvynge as sayeth the story
In whiche custaunce sat ful pytously
No thing knewe he what she was ne why
She was in suche arraye that she nyl seye
Of her astate though she shulde deye
He bringith her to Rome to his wif
He yave her to her and her yong song also
And with the senatoure she ladde her lyf
Thus can our lady bring oute of wo
Custaunce and many a nother mo
And long tyme duelled she in that place
In holy werkes ever was her grace
The senatours wif her ante was
But for alle that she knewe her newe the more
I wyl no lenger tary in this caas
But to king Alla whiche I spake of yore
For his wif wepith and siggeth sore
I wol retorne and yet I wyl custaunce
Vndre the senatours gouernaunce
King Alla whiche that hadde his modre slayne
Upon a day fyl in suche repentaunce

The Man of Lawes Tale

And if I shortly telle shal and pleyne
To Rome he cometh to resceyue his penaunce
And put him in the popes ordenaunce
In high and lowe and Jesus crist besought
Forgyue his wyched workes that he hath wrought

The same anone through Rome is born
How Alla king shal come in pygremage
By herbergeours that wenten him biforn
For whiche the senatoure as was the vsage
Rode him apens and many of his kynatte
As wele to shew his magnificence
As to done any kyng reuerence

Grete chere doth this noble senatoure
To kyng Alla and he to him also
Euery of them doth to othez grete honoure
And so besyl that on a day or two
This senatoure is to kyng Alla go
To fest shortly if I shal nat lye
Custaunces sonne went in his company

Som men wolde say at the request of custaunce
This senatoure had ledde this childe to fest
I may nat telle euery circumstaunce
Be as he may there was he at the leest
But soth it is right at his moders heest
Biforn Alla durynge the mete space
The childe stode lokynge in the kinges face

Alla the king of this childe hath grete wondre
And to the senatoure he sayde alone
Whose is this fayre childe that stondeth yondre
I not quod he by god and by seint John
A modre he hath but fadre hath he none
That I of wote and shortly in a stounde
He tolde Alla how the childe was founde

The Man of Lawes Tale

But god woot quod this senatoure also
So vertuous a lpyer in alle my lyf
Ne sawe I neuir as she ne herde of mo
Of worldy wy men mayden wydowe or wif
I dar wele say she hadde leuez With a knyf
Through oute the brest than be a woman wyche
There is no man coude bring her to the pryche

Now was this childe as lyke vnto custaunce
As possible is a creature for to be
This Alla hath the face in remembraunce
Of dame custaunce and theron mused he
If that the chilles modre were ought she
That is his wif and pryuelly he sight
And spedde him fro the table that he myght

Parfay quod he the fanton is in my hede
I ought to deme of rightfulle iugement
That in the salt see my wif is dede
And after ward he made his argument
What wote I if crist haue her hidre sent
My wif by see as wele as he her sent
To my cowntre fro thens that she went

And after anone home with the senatoure
Both alla for to se this woundre chaunce
This senatoure doth alla grete honoure
And hastely he sent after custaunce
But trust wele her lust nat for to daunce
Whan she wyste wherfore was that sonde
Vnnethes vpon her fete myght she stonde

Whan Alla sawe his wif fayre he her grette
And wepte that it was routhe to see
For at the first loke that he on her sette
He knewe berely that it was she
And she for sorowe as dombe stondith as a tre

The Man of Lawes Tale

So was hez herte shytted in hez distresse
Whan she remembred of his unkyndnesse
Thys she swoned in his owne sight
He wept and him excused ppytously
Now god quod he and alle his halowes bright
So wisely on my soule haue mercy
That of poure harme as giltles am I
As is my soune Maurice so pke poure face
Elles the fende me fetch oute of this place

Long was the sobbyng and the byttre peyne
Or that hez wofulle herte myght sece
Grette was the pyte for to here them playne
Throughe whiche playntes gan hez wo encrece
I pray you alle my labour to relese
I may nat tel theire wo vntyl to morowe
I am so wery for to speke of sorowe

But fynally whan the soth is wyse
That alla giltles is of hez wo
I trowe an hundred tymes be they hyest
And such a blisse is there betwixt them two
That saue the ioye that lasteth euermo
There is none pke that any creature
Hath seen or shal whyles that the worlde may dure

Tho prayed she hez husband mekely
That in releef of hez ppytous peyne
That he wolde pray hez fadre specially
That of his maieste he wolde enclyne
To bouchesauf som day with him to dyne
She prayed him eke he sholde by no wey
Vnto hez fadre no worde of hez say

Some men wolde seyn that the childe maurice
Doth this message vnto the Emperoure
But as I gesse Alla was nat so nyce

The Myn of Lawes Tale

To him that is so souerayne of honoure
As he that is of cristes folke the floure
Sent any childe but it is best to deme
He went him selue and so it may wele seme
This emperoure hath graunted gentylly
To come to dynez as he him besought
And wele I suppose he loked bestly
Upon this childe and on his doughter thought
Ala goth vnto his Inne as him ought
Arayed for this feest in euery wise
As ferforth as his connyng may suffice

The morowe cam alla and gan him dresse
And eke his wif the Emperoure for to mete
And forth they ryden in ioye and in gladnesse
And when she sawe her fadre in the strete
She lygh teteth down and fallith him to fete
Fadre quod she poure yong childe custaunce
Is now ful cleen oute of poure remembraunce

I am poure doughter Custaunce quod she
That wil ompe haue sent into surrye
It am I fadre that in the salte see
Was put allone and dampned for to dye
Now gode fadre mercy I you crye
Sende me nomore into none he thnesse
But thankith my lord here of his kyndnesse

Who can the pytous ioye telle alle
Betwyt them thre sithen they be thus mette
But of my tale make an ende I shalle
The day goth fast I wyl no lengre sette
These glade folke to dynez be y sette
In ioye and blisse at mete I lette them duelle
A thousand folde wele more than I can telle
This childe maurice was sithen emperoure

The Man of Lawes Tale

made by the pope and lyued cristenly
To cristes chirche dyd he grete honour
But I let al these stories passe by
Of custaunce is my tale specially
In olde Romaynes gestes men may wele fynde
Mauricius byf I bere it nat in mynde

Than king Alla whan he his tyme sey
With custaunce his holy wif so swete
To englonde he they come the right wey
Where as they lyuen in ioye and in quete
But lytel while it lasted I you beete
Joy of this worlde but tyme wyl nat abyde
fro day to nyght it chaungith as the tyde

Who lyueth euir in suche delyte a day
That is ne meued either in conscience
Do ire or talent or som kynnes affray
Enuye or pryde or passiou or offence
I ne say but for the ende of this sentence
That lytel while in ioye or plesaunce
Lastith the lyf of Alla with custaunce

for deeth that takith of high and lowe his rent
whan passed was a yere eyn as I gesse
Dute of this worlde this king Alla is went
for whom custaunce hath fulle grete heynesse
Now pray we to god his soule blisse
And dame custaunce fynally to say
Towarde the toun of Rome goth her way

To Rome is come this holy creature
And fyndeth her frendes there hole and sounde
Now is she scaped alle her aventure
And whan she her fadre hath y founde
Doun on her knees fallith to grounde
weppyn in herte for tenderesse blythe

The Marchauntes Prologue

She harpeth god an hundreth thousand sythe
In vertue and in holy almes dede
They lyuen alle and neuiz a sondre wende
Tyl dethe departed them this lyf they lede
And faryth now wele my tale is at an ende
Nowe Iesus crist that of his myght may sende
Joye after wo gouerne vs in his grace
And kepe vs alle that been in this place

Here endith the man of lawes tale
And begynneth the Marchauntes prologe

W eppnyng and waylynyng care and othez sorowe
I haue ynough both eyn and eke a morowe
Quod the marchaunte and so haue othez mo
That wedded be I trowe that it be so
For wele I wote it fareth so by me
I haue a wif the worst that may be
For though the feende cuppled to her were
She wolde him ouirmache I dar wele swere
What shulde I reherse in spectalle
Her hight malice she is a shrew with alle
Ther is a long and a large difference
Betwixt gryfildis grete pacience
And of my wif the passing cruelte
Were I vnbounde also mot I the
I wolde neuiz este come in thee snare
We wedded men lyue in sorowe and care
Asay who so wol and he shalle fynde
That I say sothe by seint thomas of ynde
As for the more parte I say nat alle
God shelde that it shulde so befall
A gode sirs hoost I haue wedded be

The Marchauntes Prologe

These monethes two and more nat parde
And yet I trowe he that alle his tye
Hath weddyd he though men him ryf
Into the hert ne coude in no maner
Telle so moche sorowe as I now here
Coude telle of my wyues cursednesse
Now quod oure hoost marchaunte so god the blisse
Sithen ye so megh knowe of that arte
Ful hartely I pray you telle us part
Gladly quod he but of myn owne soze
For sorow hert I telle may nomore

Here endith the Marchauntes prologe
And here begynnith his Tale



Whiche knyght was dwelling in Lombardy
A worthy knyght that born was at paup
In whiche he lyued in grete prosperyte

The Marchauntes Tale

And by yere a wyfles man was he
And folowed aþ his bodyly deþte
On women ther was his appetyte
As doon theſe foules that been ſecure
And whan that he was paſſed by yere
Were it for holþneſſe or for dotage
I can nat ſay but ſuche a grette corage
Hadde this knyght to be a wedded man
That day and nyght he doth alle that he can
To a ſpye where he myght wedded be
Prayng oure lord graunt him that he
Myght onys knowe that bleiſful lyf
That is betwixt an huſbond and his wyf
And for to þue bndre the holy bonde
With whiche god firſt man and woman bonde
None other lyf ſayde he is worth a bene
For wedloke is ſo eaſy and ſo ſlene
That in this worlde it is a paradise
Thus ſayde this olde knyght that was ſo wiſe
And certaynly as ſothe as god is kyng
To take a wyf is a glorious thing
And namely whan a man is olde and hoze
Than is a wyf the frute of the treſore
Than ſholde he take a yong wyf and a fayre
On whiche he myght engendre him an heire
And lede his lyf in ioy and in ſolace
Where as theſe bachelers ſyngen alas
Whan that they ſynden eny aduerſite
In loue whiche nis but childeſ banþte
And truly it ſytteth wele to be ſo
That bachelers haue peyne and wo
On brotþl grounde they byld and brotþlneſſe
They ſynde freþte whan they wene ſþherneſſe

The Marchauntes Tale

They lyue but as a Byrde oz as a best
In lybertye and vndre none areft
There as a wedded man in his astate
Lyueth his lyf blissful and ordynat
Vndre the yoke of mariage y bounde
Wele may his hert in ioye and blisse ha bounde
For who can be so buyom as a wyf
Who is so trewe and eke so ententyf
To kepe him seke and hole as is his make
For wele oz wo she wil him nat forsake
She is nat wery him to loue and serue
Though that he lye bedred tyl he sterue
And yet som clerkes sayen it is nat so
Of whiche he Theophraste is one of tho
What force though theophrast lyst lye
Ne take no wif quod he for husbondrye
As for to spare in householde thyne expence
A trew sernaunt doth more dilygence
Thy gode to kepe than doth thy selue wif
For she wyl clayme half part alle her lyf
And if that thou be seck so god me saue
Thy berzy frendes oz a true knaue
Wol kepe the bet than she that wayteth ay
After thy deth and hath done many a day
This sentence and an hundred thinges worse
Writeth this man there god his bones corse
But take no kepe of suche banpte
Do fre theophraste and herkyn me
A wif is goddes pest berply
Al othez maner pestes hardely
As londes rentes pastures oz comune
Or moebles al ben pestes of fortune
That passen as a shadowe on a walke

The Marchauntes Tale

But drede nat if I playnly speke shalle
A wyf wil last and in thy house endure
Wele lenger than the lyst parauenture
Mariage is a fulle grete sacramnt
Who that hath no wif is but shent
He lyueth helples and is alle desolate
I speke of folke in seculer astate
And herken why I say nat this for nought
The woman is for mannys helpe y wrought
The high god whan he hadde Adam mahed
And sa we him allone bely naked
God of his grete goodnesse sayde than
Let vs now make an helpe to this man
Lyke to him selue and than he made eue
Here may ye se and here by may ye preke
That a wyf is mannys helpe and his comforte
His paradyce terreste and his disporte
So buyum and so vertuons is she
They must nedes lyue in bynnyte
O flesche they be and of o blode I gesse
Not but one herte in wil and in distresse
A wif a seinte Mary benedicite
How myght a man haue any aduersite
That hath a wif certes I can nat sey
The blisse that is betwixt them tway
There may no tong telle it or hert thynke
If he be poure she helpith him to swynke
She kepith his gode and wastith it neuiz a dele
And alle that hez husbond lust she lykith wele
She sayeth nat onys nay when he sayeth ye
Do this sayeth he al redy sir saythe she
O blisfulle ordre o wedloke precious
Thou art so mery and eke so vertuons

The Marchauntes Tale

and so comended and approued eke
That enery man that holt them worth a leke
Upon his bare knees ought alle his lyf
Thankyn his god that him sent a wyf
Whelles praye god him for to sende
A wyf to leste into his lyues ende
For than his lyf is set in syphernesse
He may nat be desceyued as I gesse
So that he worke after his wyues rede
Than may he boldely bere by his hede
They be so trewe and therto eke so wyse
For whiche if thou wylt werche as the wyse
Do alway as the woman wol the rede
Lo hou iacob as these clerkes rede
By gode counseyl of his modre rebecke
Bonde the hyddes shynne aboute his necke
For whiche his faders benyson he wan
Lo iudith as the story wele tel can
By wyse counseyl she goddes people kepe
And slewe him olifernes while he slept
Lo hou abygayl by gode counseyl that she
Saued her husband Nabal whan that he
Sholde haue be slayne and loke hester also
By gode counseyl deliuered oute of wo
The people of god and made mardoche
Of assure enhaunced for to be
There is no thyng in gre superlatyf
As sayeth senequye aboue an humble wyf
Suffre thy wyues tong as caton byt
She shalle comaunde and thou shalt suffre it
And yet she wyl obey of curtesye
A wyf is kepaz of thy husbondrye
Wele may the sekeman be wayle and wepe

The Marchantes Tale

There as no wif is the house to kepe
I warne the if thou wilt wisely wiche
Loue wite thy wif as crist loueth his churche
If thou louest thy selue thou louest thy wif
Noman hatyth his flesshe but in his lyf
He fostrieth it and therfore bydde I the
Cherisse thy wif or thou shalt neuiz the
Husband and wif what so men iape or pley
Of worldly folke holden the sike & wey
They been knyghte they may no harme betyde
And namely upon the wyues syde
For whiche this January of whiche I tolde
Considreth hath in his daies olde
The lusty lyf the vertuous quete
That is in mariage hony & wete
And for his frendes on a day he sent
To telle them the effecte of his entent
With face sadde he hath his tale to them tolde
He sayd frendes I am hore and olde
And almoost god woot at my pyttes brynke
Upon my soule somwhat must I thynke
I haue my body folply despendid
Blyssed be god it shalbe amended
For I wolde be certayne a weddyd man
And that anone in alle the hast that I can
Vnto som mayde fayre and tendre of age
I pray you shapith for my mariage
Al sodenly for I wil nat abyde
And I wol fonde to a spye on my syde
To whom I may be weddid hastily
But for a smoch as ye be mo than I
Ye shal rather suche a thyng aspyen
Than I where me lyst best alpen

The Sparchauntes Tale

But one thing I warne you my frendes dere
I wol none olde wif haue in no manere
She shal nat passe ybi pere certayne
Olde fyssh & yong flessh wolde I haue ful fayn
Bet is he sayde a pyper than a pyherel
Bettre than olde beef is the tendre befe
I wol no woman of yow pere of age
It is but bene strawe and grete forage
And eke these olde wydowes godit wote
They can so mekyl craft in wadys bote
So mekyl broken harme what them lyst
That with them shulde I neuiz lyue in rest
For sondry scoles makith subtel clerkes
Woman of many a scole half a clerke is
But certaynly a yong thing may men gye
Right as man with hondes warm wey pye
Therfore I say you playnly in a clause
I wol none olde wyf haue for this cause
For if so were if I hadde such myschaunce
That I my her coude haue no plesaunce
Than sholde I lede my lyf in aboutrye
And so streyght to the deuyll whan I dye
Ne children shulde I none on her getyn
pete hadde I leupz houndes hadde me etyn
Than that myn heritage shulde falle
In straunge honde and thus I telle you alle
I doute nat I wote the cause why
Men sholde wedde and ferthermore woot I
There spekith many men of mariage
That wote nomore of it than doth my page
For whiche causes men sholde take a wyf
If he may nat lyuen chaste his lyf
Take him a wyf with trete deuocion

The Marchauntes Tale

Bicause of lefulle procreacioun
Of children to the honoure of god aboue
And nat only for paramoure ne for loue
And for they shulde lechery eschue
And yelde theire dette whan that it is due
Or for eche of them shulde helpe othez
In myschief as the sustre shalle the brodre
And lyue in chasteite fulle holyly
But sires by youre leue that am nat I
For god be thanked I dar make avaunt
I fele my lymes starke and sufficiant
To do alle that a man belongith to
And am stronge ynogh to ryde or go
Though I be hore I fare as doth a tre
That blosometh or that frute y woxen be
A blosomed tre is neither drye ne dede
I fele me nowhere hore but on my hede
My herte and al my lymes been as grene
As laurez that through the yere is sene
And sithen ye haue herd al myn entent
I pray you that to my wil ye assent
Of dyuerse men dyuersly him tolde
Of mariage many ensamples olde
Som blamed it som prysed it certayn
But at the last shortly for to sayn
As alday fallith alteracioun
Betwixt frendes in disputacioun
There fyl a stryf betwixt his brethern two
Of whiche the one was cleped Placebo
Justinus sothly called was that othez
Placebo sayd o January brothez
Ful lytel nede hadde ye my lordesodere
Counseyll to aske of any that is here

The Marchauntes Tale

But that ye be one so ful of sapience
That you ne lyketh for your high prudence
To wepyl for the worde of salamon
This worde sayed he to vs everychone
Worke alle thing by counseyl thus sayed he
And than shalt thou nat repente the
But though Salamon spake suche a worde
My own dere brother and my lord
So wisely god my soule bring at rest
I holde your own counseyl for the best
For brother myn of me take this motyf
I haue now been a courtman alle my lyf
And yet god wote though I be worthy be
I haue stonde in fulle grete and high degre
A houte lordes in ful grete astate
yet hadde I neuiz with none of them debate
I neuiz contraried them truly
I wote wele that my lord can more than I
What that he sayeth I holde it ferme and stable
I say the same or othez thing semblable
A fulle grete folle is any counseloure
That seruyth a lord of grete honoure
That dar presume or onys thynke it
That his counseyl sholde passe his lordes wytte
Nay lordes be no folles by my say
ye haue your selue spoken here to day
So high sentence so holy and so wele
That I consent and conferme every dele
your wordes and al your opunyon
By god ther is no man in this town
Ne in ytalpe conde better haue sayde
Crist holdith him of this ful wele apayed
And truly it is an high corage

The Marchauntes Tale

Of any man that stept is in a age
To take a yong wif for by my fadre kynne
poure hert hongith vpon a ioly yyn
Doth now in this matere as ye lyst
For fynally I holde it for the best
Justinus that ay sat ful styll and herde
Right on this wise he to placebo answerd
Now brother myn quod he be pacient I pray
Sithen ye haue sayde herbyn what I say
Senke among other wordes wise
Sayeth that a man ought him right wele anyse
To whom he yeueth hislonde or his catel
And sithnes I ought me anyse right wele
To whom I yeu my gode a way frome
Wele moche more I ought for to anyse me
To whom I yeu my body for alwey
I warne you wele it is no childes play
To take a wyf withoute anysement
Men must enqueren this is myn assent
Whether she be wise sobre or dronkelewe
An oute goer or other wey a shrew
A chidester or a waster of thy gode
Riche or poure or of maners wode
Al be it so that no man fynde shalle
None in this worlde that trottith hole in alle
Ne man ne beest suche as men can deuyse
But neuirthelesse it ought ynough suffice
With any wif if so that she hadde
Mo thewes gode than her vices hadde
And al this askith leysur to enquire
For god it wote I haue wept ful many a tere
Ful pryncely sithen I hadde a wif
Dryse who so wyl a wedded mannyng

The Marchauntes Tale

Certayne I fynde it but cost and care
And obseruaunces of alle blisses bare
And yet god wote my nyghbours aboute
And namely of women many a route
Sayn that I haue the moost stedefast wif
And eke the mekest one that berith lyf
But I wote best where bringith me my sho
ye may for me right as ye lyke doo
Aupseth you ye be a man of age
How that ye entren into mariatge
And namely with a yong wif and a fayre
By him that made watyr erthe and eyre
The yongest man that is in alle this route
Is besy ynough to bring it aboute
To haue a wif alone but trustith me
ye shal nat plesen her only peres thre
This is to say to do her ful plesaunce
A wif askith ful many an obseruaunce
I pray you that ye be nat euyl apayed
Wele quod this January and haue ye sayd
Straue for thy seneke and thy prouerbes
I counte nat a panper ful of herbes
Of scole termes wiser men than thou
As thou hast herde hath sentyd right now
To my purpose Placebo what say ye
I say he is a cursed man quod he
That letteth matromonye sikerly
And with that worde they rysen sodenly
And been assentyd anone that he sholde
Be wedded whan him lyst and where he wolde
High fanteasy and the besy coriousnesse
fro day to day gan in the soule impresse
Of January aboute his mariatge

The Marchauntes Tale

Many faire shappe and many faire bisage
There passith through his herte nyght by nyght
As who so toke a myrroure polished bright
And set it in a comon market place
Than shulde he se many a figure pace
By this myrroure and in the same wise
Can January in with his thought deuyse
Of maydens whiche dwelled there beside
He wist nat where he myght abyde
For if one hadde beaute in her face
A nother stont in the peoples grace
For her sadnesse and her benignyte
That of the people grete boyce hadde she
And som were riche and had badde name
But neuerthelesse hit wixt earnest and game
He at the last appoynted him in one
And lete alie othez fro his herte gone
And chose her on his owne auctorite
For loue is blynde alday and may nat see
And whan he was in his bedde y brought
He portreyed in his herte and in his thought
Her fresshe beaute and her age tendre
Her myddel smalle her armes long and slendre
Her wise gouernaunce and her gentylnesse
Her womanly beryng and her sadnesse
And whan he was of her condescended
Him thought his chose myght nat be amended
For whan he him selue concluded hadde
Him thought eche othez mannys witte so badde
That impossible it were for to reple
Apenst his choysse this was his fantespe
His frendes sent he to at his instaunce
And prayed them to do him that plesaunce

The Marchauntes Tale

That hastily they wolde to him come
He wolde abridge theire labour al & some
Nedith no more for him to go ne ryde
He was appoynted there he wolde abyde
Placebo cam and eke his frendes sone
And alderfirst he hadde them alle abone
That none of them none argumentes sholde make
Apenst the purpos whiche that he hadde y take
Whiche purpos was pleisant to god sayde he
And berry grounde of his prosperyte
He sayde ther was a mayden in the toun
Whiche that of beaute hadde grete renoun
Al were it so she was of smalle degre
Suffisith him her youth and her beaute
Whiche mayde he sayde he wolde haue to his wif
To lede in ease and holynesse his lyf
And thanke god that he myght haue her alle
That no wight with his blisse parten shalle
And prayed them to labour in this nede
And shapen that he sayleth nat to spede
And than he sayde his spryte was at ease
Than is quod he nothing me may displese
Saue one thing prichith me my conscience
The whiche I wyl reherse in youre presence
Ye haue herd sayde ful long sithnes ago
Ther may no man haue parfite blisses two
This is to say in erth and eke in heuyn
For though he kept him fro the synnes seuyñ
And eke from euery braunche of that tre
yet is there so parfyte prosperyte
And so grete ease and lust in mariatge
That euiz I am agast now in myn age
That I shal lede now so mery a lyf

The Marchauntes Tale

So delicate withoute wo and stryf
That I shal haue my heuyn in erthe here
For sithen berry heuyn is bought so dere
With tribulacion and grete penaunce
How sholde they than that lyue in suche plesaunce
As al wedded men doon with theire wyues
Come to the blisse there crist eterne on lyue is
This is my drede and ye my brethern tway
Assopleth me this question I you pray
Justinus whiche that hatyd his folp
Aunswerd anone right in his iapery
And for he wolde his long tale abridge
He wolde none othez auctoryte aledge
But sayde siz if thez be none obstakyl
O thez than this god of his high myracle
And of his mercy may so for you wirche
That oz ye haue poure rightes of holy chirche
Ye may repente of wedded mannys lyf
In whiche ye say there is no woo ne stryf
And elles god forbide but if he sent
A wedded man grace him to repent
Wele ofter rather than a synngle man
And therfore the best rede that I can
Dispeyareth you nat but haue in memory
Parauenture she may be poure purgatory
She may be goddes mene and goddes whippe
Than shal poure soule by to heuyn shippe
Swifter than an arowe doth oute of a bowe
I hope to god herafter shal ye knowe
That there nys none so grete felcrite
In mariatte ne neuiz none shalbe
That you shal let of poure saluacion
So that ye vse it as shyl is and reson

The Marchauntes Tale

The lustes of youre wif temporally
And that ye please her nat to amourosly
And that ye kepe you eke from others synne
My tale is done for my witte is thynne
Be nat agast herof my dere Brothre
But let vs wade fro this matere to an othere
The wif of bathe if ye haue vnderstonde
Of mariage whiche I haue in honde
Declared hath ful wele in litel space
Sareth now wele god haue you in his grace
And with this worde he with his Brothre
Hath take his leue and eche of them of othere
For whan they sawe it must nedes be
They wrought so by slygh and wise trefte
That this mayde whiche that May hight
As hastely as euir that she myght
Shal wedded be vnto Januarie
I trowe it were you long to tarpe
If I you tolde of euery escripte and bonde
By whiche she was enfiored in his lond
Othere for to herke of her riche arraye
But fynally comen is the day
That to the chirche bothe been they went
For to resceyue the holy sacrament
Forth cometh the preest with stole aboute his necke
And hadde her be lyke Sarra and rebecke
In wisdom and trouthe of mariage
And sayde his oryson in his vsage
And croched them and hadde god sholde them bles
And made al sikez ynough with holynesse
Thus been they weddid with solempnyte
And at the feest sptteth he and she
With othere worthy folke vpon the derys

The Marchauntes Tale

Al fulle of ioye and blisse is the paleys
And ful of instrumentes and bytyle
The moost deyntheous of alle ptayle
Biforn him stode instrumentes of suche a soun
That Dyrhus ne of Thebes amphion
Ne made neuiz suche a melodye
At euery cours cam loude mynstralcye
That neuiz ioab tromped for to here
Neyther the theomodas half so clere
At thebes whan the cyte was in doute
Bachus the wyne them shenkith alle aboute
And venus lough spon euery wight
For January was becomen her knyght
And wolde bothe assayen his corage
In libertye as eke in mariage
And with her firebronde in her honde aboute
Daunsith biforn the bryde and alle the route
And certaynly I dar wele sayn right this
E menpus that god of weddyng is
Sa we neuiz in his lypf so mery a wedded man
Holde thou thy pease thou poete marcian
That writest vs that ilke a wedding mery
Of her philologye and of him mercurye
And of songes that the muses song
To smalle is bothe penne and eke tong
For to discryuen of this mariage
Whan tendre youthe hadde wedded stouppynge age
There is suche myrthe that it may nat be writen
Assay poure selue and than may ye wyppen
If that I lacke or none in this matere
May that sittyth with so benygne chere
Her to be holden it semeth a fayr ye
Quene hester loked neuiz with suche an eye

The Marchauntes Tale

On assuere so meke a loke as she
I may pou nat deuyse al her beaute
But thus moche of her beaute telle I may
That she was lyke the bright morow of May
fulfilled of al beaute and of plesaunce
This January is rauysshed in a traunce
At euery tyme he looked on her face
But in his herte he gan her manace
That he that nyght in armes wolde her streyne
Harder than Paris euir did Eleyne
But neuirthelesse yet hadde he grete pyte
That that nyght offende her must he
And thought allas o tendre creature
Now worde god ye myght wele endure
Al my corage it is so sharpe and kene
I am a gast ye may it nat sustene
But god forbede I dyd alle my myght
Nowe wolde god it were woye nyght
And that the nyght wolde lest euir mo
I wolde that al this people were ago
And fynally he doth alle his labour
As he myght best sauyng his honoure
To hast them fro the mete in subtel wise
The tyme cam that reason was to ryse
And after that men daunsed and dranke fast
And spices alle aboute the house they cast
And ful of ioye and blisse is euery man
Alle but a squire that hight Dampayn
Whiche carft bifoze the knyght many a day
He was so rauasshed on his lady May
That for the berry peyne he was nyght wode
Almoost he sweltyd and swouned there he stode
So sore hath Venus hurte him with her bronde

The Marchauntes Tale

As that she bare it daunspynge in her honde
And to his bedde he went him hastely
Nomoze of him at this tyme speke þ
But there I lette him wepe ynough and pleyne
Tyl fresshe may wyl rewe spon his peyne
O perlonous fyre that in the bedstraue bredith
 D sampliez so that his seruice bedith
D seruaunt traytoure fals homely he we
Epyhe to the addre sligh in bosom vntrewe
God sheld vs alle from youre acqueyntaunce
D January drunken in plesaunce
Of mariage. se hou that thy Dampayn
Thyn owne squyer and thy boyn man
Entendith for to do the a belony
God graunte the thyn homely foo to a spy
For in this worlde nys worse pestilence
Than an homely fo alday in thy presence
Parfourmed hath the sonne his arke byurne
Ne lenger may the body of him sojourne
On the orisont as in that latitude
Nigh with his mantel that is so derke and rude
Can for to spede the emyspery aboute
For whiche departed is the lusty route
Fro January with thanke on every syde
Home to their houses lustely they ryde
There as they do thinges as them lyst
And when they se their tyme they go to rest
Sone after this hastely this January
Wolde go to bedde he wolde no lenger tary
He drynkihth ypocrace clarey and bernage
And spices hote to encrese his corage
And many a lectuary hadde he ful fyne
Suche as the cursed monke dan constantyn

The Marchauntes Tale

Hath Writen in his Boke of coſtu
Toete them alle he wolde nothing eſcheu
And thus to his proue frendes ſayde he
For goddes loue as ſone as it may be
Let boyde al this houſe in curteſe Wiſe
And they haue done right as he wolde deuſe
Men dronken and the traueſers drewe anone
This bryde was brought to bedde as ſtylle as ſtone
And whan the bedde was with the preſt bleſſid
Dute of the chambre hath euery wight him dreſſid
And January hath faſt in armes take
His freſſhe may his paradise his make
He kyllith her he kiſſith her ful ofte
With the bryſſelles of his berd vnſoft
Lyke to the ſhynne of hounde fyſſhe ſharpe as brere
For he was ſhaue alle newe in his manere
He rubbeth her vpon her tendre face
And ſayde thus alas I muſt trespas
To you my ſpouſe and you gretly offende
O tyme come that I wyl down deſcende
But natheleſſe conſidreth wele quod he
There is no workman what ſo euer he be
That may worche wele and haſtely
This wolde he do at leſſer paſſyng
It is no force how long that we pley
In trewe wedloke coupled be we tway
And bleſſed be the yoke that we be in
For in oure actes we may do no syn
A man may do no synne with his wiſ
Ne hurte him ſelue with his owne knyfe
For we haue leue to pley vs by the lawe
Thus lauborith he tyl the day gan da we
And than he takith a ſoppe in ſyne clarge

The Marchantes Tale

And by right in his bedde sitteth he
And after that he song ful loude and clere
And byssith his wif and makith wanton there
He was al coltysshe and ful of ragery
And ful of iargon as is fliched ppe
The stache shynne aboute his neche shakith
While that he song so chaunteth he and crakith
But god wote what may thought in her herte
Whan she sawe him by spytyng in his shert
In his nyght cappe and with his neche lene
She pryseth nat his pleipng worth a bene
Than sayde he thus my rest I wol take
Now day is come I may no lengre wake
And down he leyde his hede and slepte tyl pryme
And after whan that he sawe his tyme
Up riseth January but fresshe may
She holdith her chambre tyl the fourth day
As vsage is of wyues for the best
For euery labourer somtyme must haue rest
Orelleslong may he nat endure
This is to say no pures creature
Be it fysshe or byrde beste or man
Now wyl I speke of wofulle Dampayn
That langureth for loue as ye shal here
Therefore I speke to him in this manere
I say o sely Dampayn alas
Answer to this demaunde in this caas
How shalt thou thy lady fresshe May
Telle thy woo she wyl alwey say nay
Eke if thou speke she wol thy wo be wrey
God be thy helpe I can no better seyn
This seeke Dampayn in Venus grete syre
So brennyth that he dyeth for desyre

The Marchauntes Tale

for whiche he puttyth his lyf in auenture
No lenger myght he in this wise endure
But pryuelly a pennez gan he sorowe
And in a lettze wrote alle his sorowe
In maner of a complaynte or a lay
Vnto his fresshe and faire lady may
And in a purs of sylke hing it on his sherte
He hath y put and y leyde it on his herte
That January hath wedded fresshe may
The mone that at none was that day
Dute of Taure was in the Canker styden
So long hath mayus in her chambre hyden
As custome is vnto these nobles alle
A byrde shal nat etyn in the halle
Trydaies foure or thre at the lest
Passed be than lette him go to feest
The fourth day complete fro none to none
Whan that the high masse was y done
In halle sat this January and May
As fresshe as is the bright Iomeres day
And so besyl that this gode man
Remembrieth him vpon this Dampayn
And sayde seint mary how may this be
That dampayn entendith nat to me
Is he ay seek or how may this betyde
His squyer whiche that stode him besyde
Excused him bicause of his seeknesse
Whiche lettith him to do his besynesse
None othez cause myght make him to tary
That me forthinketh quod this January
He is a gentyl squyer by my trouthe
If that he dyed it were harme and routh
He is wise discrete honest and secre

The Marchantes Tale

As any man I wote of his degre
And therto manly and eke seruyfable
And for to be a thrifty man right able
But after mete as sone as euir I may
I wyl my selue bispyte him and may
To do him al the comferte that I can
And for that worde him blissed euery man
That of his bountye and of his gentylnesse
He wolde so comferte in sekenesse
His squyer for it was a gentyl dede
Dame quod this January take gode hede
That after mete ye with youre women alle
Whan ye haue be in chambere oute of this hal le
That alle ye go to se this Dampayn
To do him disporte he is a gentyl man
And tellith that I wyl him bispyte
Haue I nothing but restyd me a lyte,
And spede you fast for I wol abyde
Tyl that ye slepe fast by my syde
And with this worde he gan to him calle
A squyer that was marshal of his hal le
And tolde him certayn thynges what he wolde
This fresche may hath streight hez wey holde
With alle hez women vnto this dampayn
Down by his bedde syde anone sat she than
Comfertyng him as gode as she may
This dampayn whan he his tyme say
In pryncyple wise his purse and eke his byl
In whiche that he writen hadde alle his wyl
Hath put into hez honde withouten more
Saue that he sigged right wonderly soze
And softly to hez right thus sayde he
Mery and that ye discouer nat me

The Sparchauntes Tale

fo: I am dede if that this thing be hyd
This byl had she in her bosom hyd
And wente her wey pe get nomore of me
Unto January comyn there is she
And on his beddes syde sat ful softe
He takith her and kyssith her ful oft
He leyde him down to slepe and that anone
She feyned her as that she must gone
There as pe wote euery wight must nede
And whan she of this bylle hath take hede
She rente it alle to cloutes and at the last
In the pryue softly she hath it cast
Who studieth now but sayre fresshe may
And down by olde January she lay
That slept tyl the colowgh hath him awaked
Anone he prayed her to stripe her naked
He wolde of her he sayde haue som plesaunce
He sayde her clothes dyd him encumbrance
And she obeyeth he she keef or lothe
But lest that precious folke with me be wrotte
How that he wrought I dar you nat telle
Or whether her thought it paradise or helle
But I lette them wirche in theire wise
Tyl euyn song and that they must aryse
Were it by destyne or by auenture
Were it by influence or by nature
Or constillacioun that in suche astate
The heuyn stode that tyme fortunat
Was for to put a byl in venus werkes
For alle thing hath tyme as sayen clerkes
To any woman for to gete her lone
I can nat say but the grete god aboue
That knowith that none acte is causeles

The Marchauntes Tale

He demeth al for I wyl holde my pease
But soth it is hou that this freshe may
Hath take suche impressioun that day
Of pyte of this seke man Dampayn
That fro her hert she it dryue ne can
The remembraunce for to do him ease
Certayn thought she whom this thing displease
I here reche nat I him assure
To loue him best of any creature
Though he no more hadde than his shert
No pyte rynneth sone in gentyl herte
Here may ye here hou excellent fraunchise
In women is whan they them narowe auyse
Some tyrannt ther is as ther be many one
That hath an herte as hard as any stone
Whiche wolde haue let him sterue in the place
Wele rather than haue graunted him grace
And them reioysen in theire cruel pryde
And reched nat to be an hompryde
This gentyl may fulfilled of al pyte
Right so of her honde a lettre made she
In whiche she graunted him her very grace
Ther lackith nought but only day and space
Where that she myght to his lust suffice
For it shal be right as he wol deuyse
And whan she sawe her tyme vpon a daye
To visyte this Dampayn goth this freshe may
And subtelly a lettre down she thriste
Vndre his pylowe rede it if him lyst
She takith him by the hounde and herd him twyst
So secretly that noman it wiste
And hadde him be alle hole and forth she went
To January whan that he for her sent

The Sparchauntes Tale

Up riseth dampan the next morowe
al passed was his sekenes and his sorowe
He kembeth him and propneth him and pyketh
He doth al that his lady lust and liketh
And eke to January he goth as lowe
As euiz dyd a dogge for the bowe
He is so plesaunt to every man
for craft is alle who so that it can
That every wight is fayne to speke him gode
And fully in the ladies grace he stode
Thus let I dampan aboute his nede
And in my tale forth I wyl procede
Some clerkes holden that felycite
Stondith in delyte and therfore certayn he
This noble January with alle his myght
In honest wise as longith to a knyght
Shope him to lyue ful deliciously
His housyng his arraye as honestly
To his degre was made as a kynge
Among othez of his honest thinges
He hadde a gardeyn walled alle with stone
So fayne a gardeyne wote I nowhere none
for oute of doute I verily suppose
That he that wrote the romaynes of the Rose
Ne coude of it the Beaute wele deuyse
Ne priapus ne myght nat suffise
Though he be god of gardeyns for to telle
The Beaute of the gardyn and the Welle
That stode vndre a laurez alwey grene
ful oft tyme king pluto and his quene
Proserpyne and alle her feyre
Disporten them and make melodye
Aboute that Welle and daunsed as men tolde

The Marchantes Tale

This noble knyght this January the olde
Suche deynte hath in it to walken and to pley
That he wolde suffre no wight to bere the key
Saue he him selue for of the smale wyket
He bare alwey of syluer a clyket
With the whiche whan he lyst bnslytte
And whan he wolde paye his wif his dette
In some season thider wolde he go
And may his wif and no wight but they two
And thinges that were nat do a bedde
He in the gardeyn parfourned it and sped
And in this wise many a mery day
Euen this January and fresshe may
But worldly ioye may nat alwey endure
To January ne no worldly creature
O soden happe o thou fortune vnstable
Lyke vnto the scorpyon so deceyuable
That flaterst with thy hede when thou wilt styng
Thy tayle is deth througgh thyn enuenymyng
O brotyl ioye o thou suete popson queynste
O tohu monstere that subtelly canst peynste
Thy giftes vndre hewe of stedefastnes
That thou deceyuest bothe more and lesse
Why hast thou January thus desceyued
That haddest him for thy frende rescueued
And now thou hast beraft bothe his eyen
For sorowe of whiche he desireth to dyen
Alas this January that is so fre
Amyd his lust and his prosperite
Is now woyen blynde and that al sodenly
He wepeth and he wayleth ppytously
And therewithalle the fyre of jelousye
Rest that his wif shalle fal in some folye

The Sparchauntes Tale

So brent his hert that he wolde fayne
That some man bothe him and her hadde slayne
For neuiz after his deth ne his lyf
Ne wolde he that she were loue ne wyf
But euir lyue as a widowe in clothes blake
Sool as the turtyl that hath lost her make
But at the last after a moneth or twey
His sorowe gan to swage soth to sey
For he wyf it may none othez be
He paciently toke his aduersite
Saue oute of doute may he nat forgoon
That he ne was ielous euir more in oon
Whiche ielousye it was so outrageous
That neither in halle ne in othez hous
Ne in none othez place neuiz the moo
He wolde suffre her for to ryde ne go
But if that he hadde honde on her alwey
For whiche ful ofte wepyth fresshe may
That loueth Dampayn so tenderly
That she must othez dye sodenly
Or elles she must haue him at her leste
She wayteth whan her hert wolde to brest
Upon that othez syde this dampayn
Becomen is the sorowfullest man
That euir was for neither nyght ne day
Ne myght he speke a worde with fresshe may
As of his purpos of none suche matere
But if that January must it here
That hadde an honde vpon her euir mo
But neuirthelesse by writyng to and fro
And pryue signes wyf he what she ment
And she knewe of the same his entent
O January what myght it the anaple

The Marchauntes Tale

Though thou myghtest se as fer as ship doth sayle
For as gode blynde is deceyued to be
As to be deceyued whan a man may se
So argus whiche that hadde an hundreth eyen
For al that euil he coude poure or pryen
Yet was he blent and god wote so be mo
That wenyn wele that it is no thing so
Passe ouir this and ease I say nomore
This fresche may of whiche I spake of pore
In warm wey hath prentyd this clyket
That January baaz of the smale wyket
By whiche vnto his gardeyn oft he went
And Dampayn that knewe her entent
The clyket countrefetyd pryuely
There is nomore to say but hastily
Some wondre by this clyket shal be tyde
Whiche ye shal here if ye wyl abyde
O noble ourde soth sayest thou god wote
What sight it is though it be long and hote
That he nyl fynde it oute in some manere
By pryncus and tyf by may men here
Though they were kept streyt long ouir alle
They been accorded rownyng through a walle
There no wight coude haue founde suche a sight
But now to purpos or that daies eyght
Were passed or the moneth of Iul befylle
That January hath caught so grete a wyll
Through clyng of his wif him for to pley
In his gardeyn and no wight but they twey
That in a morowe vnto this may sayde he
Ryse by my wif my loue my lady fre
The turtles boyce I herd my spouse swete
The wynter is gone with his raynes wete

The Marchauntes Tale

Come forth With thyne eyen columbyne
Now fayrer Been thy eyen than is Wyne
The gardeyne is closed al aboute
Come forth my swete spouse oute of doute
Thou hast me wounded in myn herte o wyf
No spot of the newe we I in al my lyf
Come forth and let vs take oare disporte
Ichees the for my wyf and for my comforte
Suche olde lewde wordes vsed he
On dampen a signe made she
That he shoulde go bifoze With his ceket
This Dampen hath opned the wyket
And in he stert and that in suche manere
That no wight myght it see ne here
And styll he sat vndre a busshen anone
This January is beynde as is a stone
With may in his honde and no wight moo
In to this freshe gardeyn is he goo
And clapped to the wyket sodenly
Now wif quod he here nys but thou and I
That art the creature that I best loue
For by that lord that sptteth vs al aboute
I hadde leuyd right now dye on a knyfe
Than the offenden myn owne dere wyf
For goddes sake thynke how I the chese
Nat for couetyse ne othez gode doutles
But only for the loue I hadde to the
And though that I be olde and may nat se
Be to me trewe and I wyl tel the why
Certes thre thynges shulde ye Wynne therby
First loue of crist and to poure selue honoure
And alle myn heritage bothe toun and toure
I geue it you makith charters as you lyst

The Marchauntes Tale

This shal he do to morowe or the sonne riste
So wisely god my soule brynge to blys
And I pray you of counaunt ye me bysse
And though I be ielous wyte me nought
ye be so depe prynced in my thought
That whan I conside youre beaute
And therwith al the synfuld of me
I may nat certes though I shulde dye
Forbere to been oute of youre compaignye
For berry loue this is withouten doute
Now bysse me wyf and let vs roume aboute
This fresshe may whan she the wordes herde
Benygne to January aunswerde
But first and forward she began to wepe
I haue quod she a soule for to kepe
As wele as ye and also myn honoure
And of my wyfhode that tendre floure
Whiche that I haue assured in youre honde
Whan that the preest to you my body bonde
Wherfore I wyl aunswere in this manere
With the leue of you my lord so dere
I pray to god that neuir da we that day
That I ne sterue as foule as woman may
If euir I do to my kynne that shame
Or elles that I empeyre so my name
That I be fals and if I do that lache
Do stripe me and put me in a sache
And in the next ryuez do me drenche
I am a gentyl woman and no wyliche
Why speke ye thus but men be euir vnttrue
And women haue reproof of you ay ne we
ye can none othez comunycacioun I leue
But speke to vs of vntrust and vs repreue

The Marchauntes Tale

And with that worde she sawe where Damyan
Sat in a busshe and knele he began
And with her fynghers signes made she
That damyan sholde clymbe bp on a tre
That charged was with frute and bp he went
For verily he knewe al her entent
And every signe that she coude make
Wele bet than January her owne make
For in a lettre she hadde tolde him al
Of this matere how he wirche shalbe
And thus I let him syt in the perpe
And January with may rounpyng mery
B Right was the sonne and blew the firmament
Phebus of golde doune his beames hath sent
To gladen every floure with his warmnesse
He was that tyme in geminis as I gesse
But lytel fro his declynacioun
Of Cancer tous exaltacioun
And so it fyl in a bright morowe tyde
That in the garden on the ferther syde
Pluto that is king of the feyrre
And many a lady in his company
Following his wif the quene proserpyne
Eche after othez right as any lyne
Whiles that she gadred floures in a mede
In claudpan ye may the stozes rede
How in his gryfely carte he her sette
This hyng of feyrre adoun him sette
Upon a benche of turves fayre and grene
And right anone sayde he thus to his quene
My wif quod he thez may no wight say nay
The experience so proneth it every day
The treason whiche that women do to man

Ten hundredth thousand tellen I can
 Ensamples and of youre bntrouthe & brotynesse
 O Salamon wise and richest of alle richesse
 Fulfilled of sapience and of worldly glory
 Wele worthy be thy wordes in memory
 To every wight that wyt and reason can
 Thus pryseth he yet the bounte of man
 Among a thousand men yet fonde I one
 But of alle women yet fonde he neuir none
 Thus sayd the king that so knowith your wikednes
 And Iesus filius Sirach as I gesse
 He spekith of you but seldyn reuerence
 A wylde fyre and a corrupte pestilence
 So falle on youre bodies yet to nyght
 Ne se ye nat this honourable knyght
 Bicause alas that he is blynde and olde
 His owne man shal make him cokecolde
 To where he sitteth the lichoure in the tre
 Now wol I grannte of my mayestye
 Vnto this olde blynde worthy knyght
 That he shal haue agayn his eyen sight
 Whan that his wif wolde do him felony
 Than shal he knowe alle hez herlotry
 Bothe in reproof of hez and othez mo
 ye shal quod Proserpina and wil ye so
 Now by my modris soule sir I swere
 That I shal geue hez sufficiant aunswere
 And al women after for hez sake
 Though they be in any gylt y take
 With face bolde they shal them selue excuse
 And bere him down that wolde them accuse
 For lacke of annswere none of them shal dyen
 Al hadde he seen a thing with bothe his eyen

The Marchauntes Tale

yet shal we women so bisage it hardely
And wepe and swere and chide subtelly
So that ye men shal be as lewde as gees
What rethith me of poure auctoritees
I wote wele this Ieue this Salamon
fonde of vs women mo foules than one
But though he ne fonde no gode woman
yet haue ther fonde many a nother man
women fulle true ful gode and vertuouse
Wytnes of them that dwellle in cristes house
With martyrdome they preuyd their constaunce
The Romayne gestes he make remembraunce
Of many a very true wif also
But sir ne be nat wrothe also
Al though he sayde he fonde no gode woman
I pray you take the sentence of the man
He ment thus that in souerayne bounte
Nys none but god that sitteth in trinite
Ey for very god that nys but one
What make ye so moche of Salamone
What though he made a temple goddes house
What though he were riche and glorius
So made he eke a temple of false goddes
How myght he do a thing that more forbode is
Parde as fayre as ye his name enplastre
He was a lechoure and e he an ydolastre
And in his elde he very god forsoke
And if god ne hadde as sayeth the boke
yspared for his faders sake he sholde
haue lost his reigne rather than he wolde
I reue right nought of alle the belony
That he of women writeth a butter flye
I am a woman nedes I must speke

The Marchantes Tale

Dz elles swelle tyl my herte to breke
For sithen ye say that we be iangelereffes
As euir I mot broke hole my tresses
I shal nat spare now for no curtesye
To speke him harme that wolde vs belong
Dame quod this pluto be ne lenger brothe
I yeue it vp but sithen I swere myn oth
That a wyl graunte him his sight ageyn
My worde shal stonde I say you certayn
I am a kynge it spyteth me nat to lye
And I a quene quod she of the feyre
Her aunswere shal she haue I undertake
Let vs no moo wordes herof make
Forsoth I wyl you no lenger contrary
Now let vs turne agayn to January
That in the gardeyn with his fresshe may
Syngeth ful merper than the popyngeap
you loue I best and shal and othez none
So longt aboute the aleys is he gone
Tyl he was come apenst that ilke perp
Where as this Dampayn spyteth ful mery
And high amongt the fresshe leups grene
This fresshe may that is so bright and shene
Can for to sigh and sayde allas my spde
Now sir quod she for aught that may betyde
I must haue of the perps that I se
Or I must dye so soze longtith me
To ete of the smale perps grene
Helpe for her loue that is of heuyn quene
I telle you wele a woman in my plyte
May haue in frute so grete an appetyte
That she may dye but she of it haue
Allas quod he that I ne hadde here a knaue

The Marchauntes Tale

That coude clymbe allas allas quod he
But I am blynde ye sir no force quod she
But wolde ye bouchsauf for goddes sake
The pery within poure armes for to take
For wele I wote that ye mystrust me
Than sholde I clymbe wele ynough quod she
So I my fete myght set vpon poure bake
Certes quod he therof shal be nolake
Myght I pou helppyn with my herte blode
He stoupiþ down and on his bake she stode
And caught her by a twistte and by she gotte
Ladies I pray you be nat wrothe
I can nat glose I am a rude man
And sodenly anone this dampayn
Gan pulke by the smoke and in he throny
And whan that pluto sawe that wrong
To January yave aye his sight
And made him se as wele as euiz he myght
And when that he had caught his sight agayn
He was no man of thing so fayne
But on his wif his thought was euiz mo
Up to the tre he castith his eyen two
And sawe how dampayn his wif hath dressed
In suche maner it may nat be expressed
But if I wolde speke vncurtesly
Dute helpe allas harzowe he gan crye
O stronge lady hoze what dost thou
And she aunswered siz what ayleth you
Haue patience and reason in poure mynde
I haue you holpen of bothe poure eyen blynde
Up perel of my soule I shalle nat lien
As me was taught to hele with poure eyen
Was no thing bette to make you to se

The Marchantes Tale

Than for to strottyl With a man in a tre
God wote I dyd it in ful gode entent
Strottyl quod he. ye algate in it went
God yeue pou bothe a shampys deth to dyen
He dyd right so I sawe it With myn eyen
And elles I be hanged by the hals
Than is quod she my medicyne fals
For certaynly if ye myght see
ye wolde nat say these wordes to me
ye haue some glemysyng and no perfyte sight
I se quod he as wele as euil I myght
Thanked be god With both myn eyen two
And by my trouthe me thought he dyd so
ye maas gode syz quod she
This thanke haue I for I made you see
Allas quod she that euil I was so kynde
Now dame quod he lat al passe oute of mynde
Come doune my leef and if I haue myssayde
God helpe me so as I am euyl apayed
But by my fadre soule I went haue seyn
How that this dampayn hadde by the leyn
And that thy smoke he leyde vpon his brest
ye sir quod she ye may wene as ye lest
But sir quod she a man that wakith of his slepe
He may nat so sodenly take kepe
Vpon a thing ne se it so parfytly
Tyl that he be wele adawed bezyly
Right so a man that long blynde hath be
Ne may nat sodenly so sone wele se
First whan his sight is comyn agayne
As he that hath a day or tweyne y seyn
Tyl that poure sight y satel yd be a while
Ther may ful many a sight you bettyle

The Marchauntes Tale

Be waaz I pray you for by heyn hynge
fulle many a man wenyth to se a thing
And yet it is al another than it semeth
He that my concepueth oft mys demeth
And with that worde she lept fro the tre
This January who is gladd but he
He hyssith her and clepith her fulle oft
And on her wombe he strikith her ful soft
And to his paleys home he hath her ladde
Now gode men I pray you be mery and gladd
Thus endith here my tale of January
God blisse be alle and his modre Mary

Here endith the marchauntes tale
And folowith the Squyers prologue

o Oure hoost in his stioppes stondith anone
And sayde godemen herk neth euerichone
This was a sharpe tale for the nones
Sir perisse preest quod he for goddes bones
Tel be a tale as was thy for ward pore
I se wele that labouzed men in lore
Knowe moche thing by goddes dignyte
The parson him aunswerd benedicite
What apleth the man so sinfully to swere
Oure hoost aunswerde o Jankyn be ye there
I smelle a lollere in the wynde quod he
Now gode men quod oure hoost herk neth me
Abpydith for goddes digne passioun
For we shal haue now a predicacioun
This lollare wyl preche be here som what
Nay by my fadre soule that shal he nat
Sayde the Squyer he shal nat here preche

The Squyers Prologue

He shal no gospel glose here ne teche
We leue al in the grete god quod he
He wolde so we som difficulte
Dz spryngyn cokyl in oure clene corn
And therfore hoost I warne the biforn
My toly body shal a tale telle
And I shal clynke you a toly belle
That it shal wakyn alle this company
But it shal nat be of philosophy
Ne of physicas ne termes queynte of la we
There is but lytel latyn in my ma we

Here endith the squyers prologue
And here begynneth his Tale



a T surrpe in the sonde of Tartary
There duelled a king that warzed russy
Throught whiche thez dyed many a doughty man

The Squyers Tale

That noble kyng was clepyd Cambuscan
Whiche in his tyme was of so grete renown
That ther was nowhere in no reggioun
So excellent a lord and alle thing
He lacked naught that longed to a kyng
As of the secte of whiche he was born
He kepte his lay to whiche he was sworne
And therto he was hardy wise and riche
Pytous iust and alwey pelyche
Soth of his worde benygne and honourable
Of his corage as any center stable
Pong fresshe strong in armes desirous
As any bacheler duelling in his house
A fayre persone he was and fortunate
And kept alwey so wele ryalle estate
That there was nowhere suche a man
This noble kyng this tartyr Cambuscan
He hadde two sonnes on alþete his wyf
Of whiche the eldest hight Algarþyf
That oþer sonne was cleped camballo
A doughter hadde this worthy king also
That yongest was and hight Canace
But for to telle you of her beaute
It lyth nat in my tonge ne in my connyng
I dar nat take on me so high a thing
And also myn englysshe is insufficient
It must be a clerke and a rethour excellent
That knewe the coloures longyn to that arte
If I sholde dyscryue her in every parte
I am no suche I must speke as I can
And so besyl this cambuscan
Hath twenty wynter born his dyademe
As he went fro yere to yere ydeme

The Squyers Tale

Beleet the feste of his natiuptye
Done cry through oute Saray the cyte
The last Idus of Marche after the yere
Phebus the sonne ful ioly was and clere
For he was nygh his exaltacioun
In martis face and in his mansioun
In aries the hote colerpye signe
Ful lusty was the wether and benygyne
For whiche the foules apenst the sonne shene
What for the season and the yong grene
Ful loude songe theire affectiouns
Them semed to gettyn them protectiouns
Apenst the swerde of Wynter hene and colde
This cambuscan of whiche I pou tolde
In ryalle bestmentes sat on his deys
With dyademe ful high in his paleys
And helde his fest so solempne and riche
That in this worlde was there none it liche
Of whiche if I sholde tel al the aray
Than wolde it occuppe a someres day
And eke it nedith nat to deuyse
At euery cours the ordre of theire seruyse
I wol nat telle of theire straunge sewys
Ne of theire swannys ne of theire heronsewes
Eke in that londe as tellen knyghtes olde
Is some mete that is ful deynte holde
That in this londe men reche of it but smalle
There is no man that may reporten alle
I wol nat tary for it is pryme
And for it is no frute but losse of tyme
Vnto my first tale I wol haue my recours
And so besyl that after the thridde cours
While this kyng sat thus in his noblepe

The Squyers Tale

Herhnyng his mynstralles theire thinges pley
Bifore him at his borde deliciously
In at the halle doze al sodenly
There cam a knyght upon a stede of brasse
And in his honde a brode myrroure of glas
Upon his thombe he hadde of golde a ryng
And by his syde a naked swerd hanging
And by he rydeth to the high borde
In al the halle ne was there spoke a worde
For meruaile of this knyght him to beholde
And bisely they wayten yong and olde
The straunge knyght that cam so sodenly
Al armed saue his hede ful richely
Salupth kyng quene and lordes alle
By ordre as they sytten in the halle
With so high reuerence and obeysaunce
As wele in speche as in countenaunce
That Gaueyn with his olde curtesye
Thoughe he were come agayn oute of fayrye
Ne coude him amende with a worde
And after this bifore the high borde
He with manly boyce sayde his messagge
After the fourme vsed in his langage
Withoute byce of syllable or lettre
And for his tale shulde seme the bettre
Accordaunt to his wordes was his chere
As techith arte of speche them that it lere
Al be it that I can nat sounde his style
Ne I can nat clymbe on so high a stile
Than say I thus to the comonentent
Thus moche amounteth alle that he ment
If it so be that I haue it in mynde
He sayde the kyng of arabye and of ynde

The Snyper's Tale

My liege lord on this solempne day
Salueth you as he best can and may
And sendith you honoure at youre fest
By me that am al redy at youre best
This stede of brasse that easily and wele
Can in the space of a day naturcl
This is to say in foure and twenty houres
Where you lyst in droughte or in shoures
Bere youre body into euery place
To whiche youre herte wylneth for to pase
Withoute wim of you through foule or fayre
Or if you lyst to fle as high in the eyre
As doth an eagle whan him lyst to soze
This same stede shal bere you euirmoze
Withoute harme tyl ye be there ye lyst
Though that ye slepe on his backe or rest
And turne agayn with wrping of a pyn
He that it wrought coude many a gyn
He wayted many a constellacioun
Or that he hadde wrought his operacioun
And knewe many a seale and many a bonde
This myrroure che that I haue in myn honde
Hath suche a myght that men may in it se
Whan thez shal falle any aduersite
Vnto youre reigne or vnto youre selue also
And openly who is youre frende or foo
And ouiz al this if any lady bright
Had set her hert on any maner knyght
If he be fals she shal his treason se
His newe loue and alle his subteltye
So openly that ther shal no thing hyde
Wherfore apenst this lusty somers tyde
This myrroure and this ryng as ye may se

The Squyers Tale

He sent hath to my lady Tenace
poure excellent doughter that is here
The vertue of this ryng if ye wol here
Is this. if that it lyst her for to were
Upon her thombe or in her purse it bere
There is no foule that fleeth vndre heuyn
That she ne shalle vnderstonde his steuyn
And knowe his menyng openly and playn
And aunswere him in his langage agayn
And euery gras that growith vpon the rote
She shal knowe and whom it wol do bote
Al be his wounde neuiz sodepe or wyde
This naked swerd that hangith by my syde
Suche vertue hath that what man ye smyte
Throughe oute his armure it wol herue and byte
Were it as thicke as a braunched oke
And what man is wounded with the stroke
He shalle neuiz be hole tyl ye list of grace
To stryke him with the platte in the same place
There he is hurt that is as mekyl to sayn
ye must with the plat swerde agayn
Stryke him in the wounde and it wol close
This is verzy soth withouten glose
It sayleth nat whiles it is in poure holde
And whan the knyght hadde thus his tale tolde
He rode oute of the halle and doun he light
His stede whiche that shone as the sonne bright
Stondith in the courte styll as any stone
This knyght into the chambre is led anone
And is vnarmed and to mete y sette
The presentes be right richely sette
This is to say the swerd and the myrroure
Been born anone to the high toure

The Squyers Tale

With certayne officers demed therfore
And vnto Canace this ryng is boze
Solemnely there she sat at the table
But sikerly withouten any fable
The horse of bras that may nat be remeuyd
It stont as it were in the grounde y cleuyd
They may it nat oute of the place dryue
For none engyns wyndas ne polpue
And cause why for they can nat the craft
And therfore in the place they haue it last
Tyl that the knyght haue taught them the manere
To borden him as ye shal after here
Grete was the prees that swermyd to and fro
To galwren on the horse that stode so
For it so high was so brode and so long
So wele proporcioned to be strong
Right as it were a stede of lumbardy
Therwith so horsely and so quych at eye
As it a gentyl poleyn courser were
For certes fro his tayle vnto his ere
Nature ne arte coude him nat amende
In no degre as alle the people wende
But euirmore theire moost wondre was
How it coude go and was of bras
It was a fayre as al the people semed
Dyuerse folke dyuersly they demed
As many hedes as many wyttes the2 been
They mozmyd as doth a swarme of been
And maken shylles after theire fantesye
Rehersyng of the olde poetrye
And sayde it was lyke the peggase
The horse that hadde wynges for to fle
Whelles it was the grekes horse Synon

The Squyers Tale

That brought trope in to destruction
As men in olde gestes rede
Myght hert quod one is enir more in drede
Þat trowe som men of armes be therein
That shapen them this cyte for to wyne
It were right gode that alle suche thinge were knowe
Another rowned to his fela we lowe
And sayde he lyed for it was rather lyke
An apparence made by som magyke
As iogLOURS pleyen at the festes grete
Of sondry doutes they iangel and trete
Aslewde people deme alday comonly
Of thinges that been made more subtelly
Than they can in theire lewdnesse comprehend
They demen gladly to the badde ende
And som of them wondred on the myrzour
That boyn was by in the mayster toure
How men myght in it suche thinges se
An othez answerd and sayde it myght wele be
Naturally made by composiciouns
Of aungels and of sly reflectiouns
And sayde that in rome was suche one
They spake of alocen and of bytelone
And of aristotle that writen in theire lyues
Of queynte myrzours and of prospectatyues
As knowe they that haue theire bokes herde
And othez folke haue wondred on the swerd
That wol perysse through euery thinge
And felle in speche of thelephus the kinge
And of achilles with his queynte spere
For he coude with it bothe hele and dere
Right in suche wise as men may with the swerde
Of whiche right nowe ye haue your selue herd

The Squyers Tale

They speken of sondry hardyng of metal
And speken of medycynes therwithalle
And hou and whan it sholde hardyd be
Whiche knowe is algate to me
Tho speke they than of Canaces ryng
And sayde that al suche wondre thing
Of craft of rynges herde they neuir noon
Sawe that he moysee and king Salamon
Hadde a maner connyng of suche an arte
Thus sayn the people and drawen them a parte
But neuir theles som sayde that it was
Wondre to make of fern asshes glas
And yet is glas nat lyke asshe of fern
But for they haue knowe it so fern
Therefore sesith the ianglyng and the wondre
As soze wondre some on cause of the thundre
On ebbe and floode on gossomer and on myst
And on alle thing tyl the cause is wyse
Thus iangel they and demyn and deuyse
Tyl that the kyng han from his borde aryse
Phobus hath lost the angle merydional
And yet ascendyng was the best ryalle
The gentyl poun with his aldran
Whan that this tartyr kyng Cambuscan
Rose from his borde there he sat ful hye
Bifore him goth the loude mynstralcye
Tyl that he cam to his chambre of paramentes
There as they sownyn dyuers instrumentes
That is lyke an heyn for to here
Now daunsen lusty Venus children dere
For in the fyssh theire lady sat ful hye
And loked on them with a frendly eye
Tyl the noble kyng is set upon his trone

The Squyers Tale

This straunge knyght is fet to him ful sone
And on the daunce goth with Canace
Here is the reuel and the iolyte
That is nat able a dul man to deuyse
He must haue knowe loue and his seruyse
And be a festliche man as freshe as may
That shal pou deuyse such an array
Who coude you telle the fourme of daunces
So vnconthe and so freshe contaunces
Suche subtel lokynge and dissymlynge
For drede of ielousye mennys persecynges
No man but Launcelot and he is dede
Therfore I passe ouer of al this lustybede
I say no more but in this ioly nesse
Glete them tyl men to souper them dresse
The steward biddyth spices for to hye
Andeke the wyne in alle this melodye
The bysschers and the squyers been gone
The spyces and the wyne is comen anone
They ete and drynke and whan this was at ende
Vnto the temple as reason was they wende
The seruyce done they souper al by day
What nedith me to reherse theire array
Eche man wote wele that a knynges fest
Hath plente to the moost and to the lest
And deyntes mo than be in my knowyng
And after souper goth this noble knyng
To se this horse of brasse with alle the route
Of lordes and of ladies him aboute
Suche wondryng was there of this horse of bras
That sithen the grete sege of trope was
There as men sawe such an horse also
Ne was there such wondryng as was tho

The Squyers Tale

But fynally the king asked the knyght
The vertue of this courser and the myght
And prayed to telle him his gouernaunce
The horse anone gan to trippe and daunce
Whan that this knyght leyde honde on his rayne
And sayde sir ther is nomore to sayne
But whan you lyst to ryde any where
ye must trylle a pyn that stont in his ere
Whiche I shalle you telle hit wyl be two
ye must name him to what place also
Or to what countre that ye lyst to ryde
And whan ye come there ye lyst abyde
Byd him discende and trylle another pyn
For therein lyth the effecte of alle the kyn
And he wol down descende and do youre wyl
And in that place he wol abyde styll
Though alle the worlde hath the contrary swore
He shal nat thens be drawe ne bore
And or if you lyst bydde him thens gone
Tryl this pyn and he wol banysse anone
Dute of the sight of euery maner wight
And come agayn be it by day or nyght
Whan that you cleppyn him agayn
In suche a tyse as I shal to you sayn
Hit wene you and me and that right sone
Ryde whan ye lyst there is nomore to done
Enfourmed whan the kynig was of the knyght
And hath conceyued in his wytte aright
The maner and the fourme of al this thing
Fulle gladd and blythe was this noble kynig
Repayryng vnto this reuel as bifore
The brydel is to toure y born
And kept among his Jewelles leef and dere

The Squyers Tale

The horse banysshed I not in what manere
Dute of theire sight ye gete nomore of me
But thus I let in lust and in tolyte
This cambuscan his lordes festeyng
Tyl nyght the day began to sprynge

Explicit prima pars
Et sequitur pars secunda

t He noyrc of digestion the sleep
Gan on them Wynke and badde them take kepe
That moche inete and laboure wyl haue rest
And with a gappynge mouth he them al hyst
And sayde it was tyme to lye adoun
For blode was in his domynacion
Cherisse blode natures frendes quod he
They thanken him galpyng by two by thre
And every wight gan drawe him to his rest
As sleep them badde and take it for the best
Theire dremes shal nat be tolde for me
ful were theire hedes of fumosite
That causith dreame of whiche ther is no charte
They slepyng tyl it was pryme lartge
The moost parte but if it were Canace
She was ful mesurable as women be
For of her fadre hath she take her leue
To go to rest sone after it was eue
Heryst nat apalled for to be
Ne on the morowe vnfestliche for to see
And slept her first slepe and awoke
For suche ioye she in her myrroure toke
Bothe of her ryng and of her myrroure
That twenty tyme she chaunged coloure

The Squyers Tale

And in her sleep for the impressioun
Of her myrroure she hadde a visoun
Wherefore of the sonne gan byglyde
She clepyd her maystresse her beside
And sayde that her lust for to aryse
These olde woman that been gladly wise
As her maystesse answered her anone
And sayde madame whether wol ye gone
Thus avely for folke been alle in reste
I wol quod she aryse for me leste
No lenger slepe but walchen aboute
Her maystresse clepith women a grete route
And by they ryse wele ten or twelue
Up riseth fresche Canace her selue
As rody and bright as the yong sonne
That in the ram is foure degrees yronne
No higher was he whan she redy was
And forth she walkith easely a paas
Arayed after the lusty season sote
Lyghtly for to pley and walchen on fote
Nat but with fyue or syxe of her menye
And in a trence forth in the parke goth she
The vapoure whiche fro the erthe glode
Makith the sonne to seme rody and brode
But neuirthelesse it was fayre of sight
That it made alle theire hertes for to light
What for the season and the moornyng
And for the foules that she herde synng
For right anone she wist what they ment
Right by theire song and knewe al theire entent
The knotte why that every tale is tolde
If it be tarped tyl the lust be colde
Of them that haue it herked after yore

The Squyers Tale

The sauoure passith and euir lenger the more
for fol somnes of his prolixite
And by the same reason thinkith me
I sholde vnto the knotte condescende
And make of her walkyng sone an ende
A mydde a treford reyde as white as chalke
As Canace was pleyng in her walke
Ther sat a faucon ouer her hede ful hye
That with a pytous voyce she gan to crye
That al the wode resounded of her crye
And beten hadde her selue so pyton sty
With both her wynges tyl the rede blode
Ran endlong the tre there as she stode
And euir in one she cryed alwey and shrpyght
And with her beke her selue to twyght
That ther nas tygre nor so cruelle best
That duellith othez in wode or in forrest
That nolde haue wepte if he wepe coude
For sorowe of her shrpyche alwey soloude
For ther was neuir yet man on lyue
If that he coude a faucon wele discryue
That herde of such a nothez of feynesse
As wele of plumage as of gentylnesse
Of shappe and alle that myght rehned be
A faucon perettryne than semed she
Of fremde londe and euir more as she stode
She swounded now and now for lacke of blode
Tyl wele nyght is she fallen fro the tre
This fayre kynges doughter Canace
That on her fyngez bare the queynte rynge
Throughe whiche she vnderstode wele enery thing
That any foule may in his leden sayn
And coude aunswere in his leden agayn

The Squyers Tale

Ratȝ vnderstonde what this faucon seyde
And wele nyȝt for the routhe almoost she deyde
And to the tre she goth ful hastily
And on this faucon lokeþ ful pytously
And helde hez lappe a brode for wele she wyȝt
The faucon must falle fro the tȝyȝt
Whan that it swouned next for lache of blode
Alonge while to wayte there she stode
Tyl at the last she spake in this manere
Vnto the hawke as ye ſhal after here
What is the cause if it be for to telle
That ye be in this furyal peyne of helle
Quod canace vnto this hawke aboue
Is this sorowe of deth or losse of loue
For as I trowe theſe been the cauſes tuo
That cauſen moost a gentyl hert wo
Of othez harme it rekiþ nat to ſpeke
For ye poure ſelue ſpon poure ſelf ye wreke
Whiche preynt wele that othez loue or drede
Muſt be encheſon of poure cruel dede
Sithen that I ſe none othez wiȝt you chace
For loue of god ſo do poure ſelf grace
Or what may be poure helpe. for weſt ne eſt
Saue I neuir or nowe byrde ne beſt
That faryd with him ſelue ſo pytouſly
Ye ſle me with poure ſorowe berply
I haue of you ſo grete compaſſioun
For goddes loue come fro the tre a doun
And as I am a kynȝes doughter trewe
If that I berply the cauſes knewe
Of poure diſeaſe if it lay in my nyȝt
I wolde amende it or it were nyȝt
As wys helpe me grete god of kynde

The Squyers Tale

And herbes shalle I right ynough fynde
To hele with poure hurtes hastely
Tho shryght this faucon yet more pytously
Than euir she dyd and fyl to grounde anone
And lyth as wone as dede as any stone
Tyl Canace hath in her lappe her take
Vnto tyme she gan oute of her swoune awake
And after that she oute of swoun gan brayde
Right in her whesleden thus she sayde
That prte ryueth sone in gentyl herte
felyng his symilitude in peynes smert
Is proued alday as men may se
As wele by weite as by auctoryte
for gentyl herte bydeth gentylnesse
I se wele that ye haue of my distresse
Compassioun my faire Canace
Of very womanly benignyte
That nature in poure principales hath set
But for no hope for to fare the bette
But for to obeie to poure hert fre
And for to make othez be ware by me
As by the whelp chasted is the loun
Right for that cause and that conclusioun
While that I haue leysur and space
My harme I wyl confesse or I paas
And euir while that one her sorowe tolde
That othez wepte as she to water wolde
Tyl that the faucon hadde her be styll
And with a sigh thus she sayde her wyll
There I was bred alas that hard day
And fostred in a roche of marble gray
So tenderly that nothyng ayleth me
I ne wylst what was aduersyte

The Squyers Tale

Tyl I coude fynde ful bytth bndre the sky
Thoduelled a tarcelet me fast by
That semed wel of alle gentylnesse
Al were he ful of treason and falsnes
It was so wrapped bndre humble chere
And bndre hue of trouth in suche manere
Bndre plesaunce and bndre besy peyne
That I ne coude haue wende he coude fayne
So depe in grene he dyed his coloures
Ryght as a serpent hideth him bndre floures
Tyl he may se his tyme for to byte
Ryght so this god of loues ppcrypte
Doth so his serymones and his obersaunces
And kepith in semblaunce of his obseruaunces
That sowneith vnto gentynesse of loue
As in a tombe is alle the sper aboue
And bndre is the corps suche as ye woot
Suche was this ppcrypte bothe colde and hote
And in this wise he seruyd his entent
That saue the feende none wist what he ment
Tyl he so long hadde wept and compleyned
And many a yere his seruyce vnto me feyned
Tyl that my hert to pytous and to nyce
Al innocent of his crowned malice
For ferde of his deth as thought me
Vpon his othes and his suretie
Graunted him loue vpon this condicioun
That euirmo myn honoure and my renoun
Were sauyd bothe pryue and aperte
This is to sayn that after his deserte
I gaue him alle my hert and alle my thought
God wote and he and othez wise nought
And toke his herte in chaunge of myn for ay

The Squyers Tale

But sothe is sayde gone sith many a day
A true wight and a theef thinke nat one
And whan he sawe the thyng so fer agone
That I hadde graunted him my love
In suche a guyse as I haue sayde aboue
And yewe him my true herte as fre
As he swore he yawe his herte to me
Anone this tygre fulle of doublenesse
Fyl on his knees with so grette humblenesse
With high reuerence as by his chere
Solpke a gentyl louez of manere
So rauysshed as it semed for the ioye
That neuiz troylus ne Paris of troye
JASON certis ne none othe man
Sithen Cameth was that al therfirst began
To louen two as writen folke biforn
Ne neuiz sithen the first man was born
Ne coude man by tWenty thousand part
Countrefete the sophymes of his arte
Ne worthy to vnbohle his galoché
There doublenesse oz faynyng shold approche
Ne so coude thanke a wight as he dyd me
His maner was an heuyn for to se
To any woman were she neuiz so wise
So paynted he his chere at poynte deuyse
As wele his wordes as his contaunce
And so I loued him for his obeysaunce
And for the trouthe ydemed in his hert
That if so were that any thing him smert
Al were it neuiz solyte and I it wyft
Ne thought I felte deth at my hert tWyft
And shortly so ferforth this thyng is went
Tyl that my Wyl is his Wyllis instrument

The Squyers Tale

This is to sey my Wyl obeyed to his Wille
In alle thing as fer as reason fyl
Kepyng the Boundes of my worshippinge euir
Ne neuir hadde I thing so leef ne leuez
As him god wote ne neuir shal nomo
This lastydenger than a yere or two
That I supposed of him nothing but gode
But synally thus at the last it stode
That fortune wolde that he must twayne
Dute of that place whiche I was in
Where me was woo it is no questiou
I can nat make of it discripcioun
For one thyng dar I telle boldly
I knowe what the peyne of dethe is therby
Suche harme I fet that he ne myght beleue
So on a day of me he toke his leue
So sorowfully eke that he wende verily
That he hadde felt as moche sorowe as I
Whan that I herde him speke and sawe his hewe
But neuirtheles I thought he was so trewe
And eke that he repayre sholde agayne
Within a lytel while sothe to sayne
And reason wolde eke that he must go
For his honoure and ofte it fallith so
That I made vertue of necessity
And toke it wele sithen it nedes must be
As I best myght I hyd fro him my sorowe
And toke him by the honde seint John to sorowe
And sayde thus so I am poures alle
Be ye suche as I haue be to you and shal
What he aunswerd nedith nat to reherse
Who can say bette than he that can do wers
Whan hath he al sayde than hath he done

The Snyper's Tale

Therefore bishoneth him to haue a long spon
That shal ete with a feende thus herde I say
So at the last he must forth his wey
And forth fleeth tyl he come where he lyst
Whan it cam him to purpos for to ryst
I trowe he hadde the texte in mynde
That al thing repayring to his kynde
Gladith it selue thus say men as I gesse
Men loue of proppr kynde newefanglenesse
As byrdes done that men in cages fede
For thogh thou nyght and day take of them hede
And strawe theire cage feyre and soft as silke
And geue them sugere hony brede and myche
yet right anone as that his doze is by
He with his feet spurneth doune his cuppe
And to the wodde he wol and wormes ete
So newefangyl been they of theire mete
And loue noueltees of proppr kynde
Nogentylnesse of blode may hem bynde
So ferde this tarcellet alas the day
Though he were gentyl born freshe and gay
And godely for to se humble and free
He sa we byon a tyme a kyte flee
And sodenly he louyd this kyte so
That al his loue is clene fro me go
And hath his trouthe falsed in this wise
Thus hath the kyte my loue in hiz serpyse
And I am born withoute remedye
And with that worde this faucon gan to crye
And swouned oft in Canaces barme
Grete was the sorowe for the haukes harme
That Canace and alle her women made
They nyght hou they myght the faucon glade

The Squyers Tale

But Canace home berith her in her lappe
And softly in plasters gan her wrappe
There as she with her beke hadde hurt her setue
Now can nat Canace but herbes delue
Dute of the grounde and make salues newe
Of herbes fyne and freshe of hewe
To hele with the hauke fro day to nyght
She doth her besynesse and al her myght
And by her beddes hede she made a mew
And couered it with beluettes blewe
In signe of trouthe that is in women seen
And al withoute the mew is peynted grene
In which were peynted al these false foules
As been these tydiffes tarcelles and oules
Right for despyte were paynted her besyde
Dyes on them to crye and to chide
Thus lette I Canace her hauke heppyn
I wol as now no more speke of her ryng
Tyl it come eft to purpos for to sayn
How that this faucon lat her loue agayne
Repentyn as the story tellith vs
By mediacion of Camballus
The kynges sonne of whiche I you tolde
But hens forth I wyll my processe holde
To speken of auentures and batayles
That yet was neuiz herde so grette meruayles
First I wyll you telle of Cambuscan
That in his tyme many a cyte wan
And after wol I speke of algaris
How that he wan theodora to his wyf
For whom ful ofte in grette peryl he was
Ne had he be holppn by the hors fbras
And after wol I speke of Camballo

The Squyers Tale

That faught in lystes with Brethern two
For Canace or that he myght her wyne
And there I left I wyl agayne begynne

Explicit pars secunda

Et incipit pars tercia

a pollo whryllith by his chare so hight
Tyl that god Mercurius house the sight

There is nomore of the squyers tale

The wordes of the frankelene

i N fayth Squyer thou hast the wele y quytte
And gentylly. I pryse wele thy wytte
Quod the frankelene considryng thy yowthe
So felyngly thou spekest sir I allowthe
As to my dome there nys none that is here
Of eloquence that shal be thy pere
If that thou lyue god gyue the right gode chaunce
And in vertue sende the contynuaunce
For of thy speche I haue right grete deynthe
I haue a sonne and by the trinite
I hadde lyuez than twenty ponde worth londe
Though it right now be fallen in my honde
He were a man of suche discrecioun
As that ye been fy on possessioun
But if a man be vertuous withalle
I haue my sonne synned and yet shalle
For he to vertue lysteth nat to attende
But for to pley at dyce and dispende
And lese alle that he hath in his vsage

The frankleyns prologue

And he hadde leuez taken with a page
Than to comyn wight any gentyl wight
Where he myght lerne gentylnesse aright
Stra we for youre gentylnesse quod thooure hoost
What frankelyn parde sir wele thou wotest
That eche of you must telle at the lest
A tale or two or breken his bihest
That knowe I wele sir quod the frankelyn
I pray you haue me nat in disdeyne
Though to this man I speke a worde or two
Telle on thy tale withoute wordes mo
Gladly sir hoost quod he I wylle obeye
Vnto youre wille. now herken what I say
I wyl you nat contrary in no wise
As fer as that my wytte wyl suffice
I pray to god that it may please you
Than wote I wele it is gode ynow

Here begynneth the frankleyns prologue

¶ These olde gentyl brytons in theire daies
Of dyuers auctours maden theire layes
Rymed first in theire owne bryton tong
Suche layes with theire instrumentes they song
Drelles reddyn them for theire plesaunce
And one of them haue I in remembraunce
Whiche I shal say with a gode wyl as I can
But sires bicause I am a bozel man
At my begynnynge first I you beseeche
Haue me excused of my rude speche
I lernyd neuiz rethorpye in certayn
Thynge that I speke must be bare and playne
I slept neuiz in the mount of perna so

The Frankleyns Tale

Ne lerneþ Marcus Tullius ne ciþhero
Coloures knowe þ none Withouþen drede
But ſuche coloures as growen in the mede
Or elles ſuche as men dopen or peynþe
Coloures of rethorþke be to me queynþe
My ſpiryte felith in no ſuche matere
But and ye lyſt my tale ſhalþe ye here

Here endith the Frankleyns prologue
And here begynneth his tale



i In Armoryk that called is Brytayne
There was a knyght that loued and dyd his peyne
To ſerue ladies in his beſt wyſe
And many a laboure and many a grette empyſe
He for his lady wrought or ſhe was wonne
For ſhe was one the fayreſt vndre ſonne
And eke thereto comyn of ſo high kynred

The franklyn as T

That wele vnnethe durst the knyght for drede
Tel her his woo his payne and his distresse
But at the last she for his worthynes
And namely for his meke obeyssaunce
Hath suche appetyte caught of his penaunce
That she pryncely fyl of his accorde
To take him for her husbonde and her lord
Of suche lordship as men haue ouer their wyues
And for to lede in the more blisse their lyues
Of his fre wille he swore her as a knyght
That neuir in alle his lyf he day ne nyght
Ne sholde vpon him take no maystrye
Aynst her wyll ne by the her ielousye
But her obeye and folowe her wille in alle
As any loue to his lady shal
Saue that the name of soueraynte
That wolde he haue for shame of his degre
She thankith him of his humblenesse
She sayde sir sithen of youre gentylnesse
Ye profer me to haue so large a reyne
Ne wol god neuir bitwixe vs twayne
As in my tyme were other warre or stryf
Sir I wol be youre humble true wyf
Haue here my trouthe tyl that my hert brest
Thus been they bothe in quyet and in rest
For one thyng sires sauely dar I say
That frendes eueriche othe must obeye
If they wyl lyue in pease and holde company
Loue wyl nat be constreyned by maystrye
Whan maystrye is come the god of loue anone
Betith his wynges and fare wele he is gong
Loue is a thyng as any thought free
For women of kynde desyre liberte

The Frankeleyns Tale

And nat to be constreynd as a thralle
and so doth men if I the soth telle shal
Loke who is moost pacient in loue
He is at his auantage al aboue
Pacience is an high bertue certayne
for it benquysshith as clerkes sayn
Thynghes that rigoure shal neuiz atteyne
for euery worde men may nat chide and pleyne
Lernyth to suffre or elles so mot I gone
ye shal it lerne whethez so ye Wyl or uone
for in this worlde certeyne no wight is
That he ne doth or sayeth somtyme amys
He sekenes or constyllacioun
Wyne wo or chaungyng of complexioun
Causith fulle oft to do a mys or speken
On euery wrong a man may nat be wrekyng
After the tyme must be temporaunce
To euery wight that can of gouernaunce
And therfore hath this wise worthy knyght
Tolpnen in ease suffraunce her behyght
And she to him ful wisely gan swere
That neuiz sholde there be defaute in here
Here men may see in humble wise accorde
Thus hath she take her seruaunt and her lord
Seruaunt in loue and lord in mariage
Than was he bothe in lordshippe and in seruage
Seruage nay but in lordshippe aboue
Sithen he hath both his lady and his loue
His lady certis and his wyf also
The whiche that la we and loue accorde therto
And whan he was in this prosperite
Home with his wyf he goth to his countre
Nat fer from penmarke there his duelling was

The Frankeleyns Tale

Where as he lyueth in blisse and in solas
Who coude telle but he that weded had be
The ioye the ease and the prosperyte
That is bitwyte an husbond and his wif
A yere or more lestith this blissful lyf
Tyl that this knyght of whiche I spake thus
That of hapyrude was clepyd Arueragus
Shope him to gone and duelle a yere or twayne
In englonde that clepyd was the Britayne
To seke in armes worshippe and honoure
For alle his lust he set in such labour
And duelled there two yere the boke sayeth thus
Now wol I stynt of this Arueragus
And speke I wol of Dorrygene his wyf
That louyd her husbond as her hertes lyf
For his absence wepith she and siketh
As done these gode wyues whan they mygheth
She moornyth wakith waplith and playneth
Desire of his presence so her distrayneth
That alle this wyde worlde she set at naught
Her frendes that knewe her heuy thought
Conforten her in alle that euil they may
They prechen her they teche her nyght and day
That causeles she sleeth her self allas
And euery comfort possible in that caas
They do to her and alle theire besynesse
To auoyde her sorowe and her heynesse
By processe as ye knowen eueryhone
Men may so long graue in a stone
Tyl some figure therin prynted be
So long haue they comforted her that she
Receyued hath by hope and by reason
The enprentynge of her consolacion

The Frankeleyns Tale

Through which her grete sorowe began to a swage
She may nat alwey duryn in suche arage
And eke Arueragus in alle this care
Hath sent her lettres home of his welesfare
And that he wol come hastely agayne
Dreles hadde this sorowe her hert slayne
Her frendes sawe her sorowes gan for to slake
And prayed her on their knees for goddes sake
To come and come her in company
Alwey to dyprien her derke fanteisy
And fynally she graunted that request
For wele she sawe it was for the best
Now stode her castelle fast by the see
And ofte with her frendes walkith she
Her to disporte upon the banke on hye
Where as she may shippes and barges spe
Salpnyng their course where them lyst to go
But yet was that a parcel of her wo
For to her selue ful ofte allas sayde she
Is there no shippe so many as I se
Wolde brynge home my lord than were myn hert
Alle warysshed of his byttre peynes smert
Another tyme she wolde sytte and thynke
And cast her eyen downward from the brynke
But when she sawe the gryfely rocks blake
For very feer so wolde her hert quake
That on her fete she myght nat sustene
Than wolde she sytte doune upon the grene
And pitously into the see beholde
And say right thus with sorowfulle sigghes colde
Eterne god that through thy purueaunce
Redest the worlde by certayne ordenaunce
In ydelles as men say ye nothyng make

The Frankeleyns Tale

But lord this gryssly feendly rockes blake
That sowen rather bnto foule confusioun
Of werke than any fayre creacioun
Of suche a parfyte wise god and a stable
Why haue ye wrought this werke vnreasonable
For by this werke north south west ne est
There nys y fostred man byrde ne best
It doth no gode to my wytte but annoyeth
Se ye nat lord how mankynde it distroyeth
A hundred thousand bodies of mankynde
Haue rockes slayne al though they be nat in mynde
Sithen mankynde is so faire a part of thy werke
Thou it made first lyke to thy owne merke
Than semyth it ye haue do a grete charite
Toward mankynde but how may it than be
That ye suche meanys make it to distroyen
Suche meanes ne do no gode but annoyen
I wote wele clerkes wol say as them lyst
By argumentes that alle is for the best
Though I ne can the causes wele know
But that god that made the wynde to blowe
As hepe my lord this is my conclusioun
To clerkes let I al this disputacioun
But wolde god that alle these rockes blake
Were sonkyn in to helle for his sake
These rockes sle my herte for fere
Thus wolde she say with many a pytous tere
Her frendes sawe that it was no disporte
To roumyn by the see but discomforte
And shapen for to pley somwhere elles
But leden her by ryuers and by wellles
And eke in othe places dilectables
They daunse and pley at the chesse & at the tables

The Frankeleyns Tale

So on a day right on the morowe tyde
Vnto a gardeyn that was there beside
In whiche that they hadde made theire ordenaunce
Of bitayle and of othez purueaunce
They gone and pley them al the long day
And this was in the sixte morowe of may
Whiche may hath peynted with hez soft shoures
This gardeyn fulle of leups and of floures
And craft of mannys honde so curiously
Arayde hath this gardyne truly
That neuiz was there gardyn of suche pryce
But if it were the berzy paradise
The odoure of floures and the freshe sight
Wolde haue made any hert lighte
That euiz was boyn But if to grete sekenesse
Or to grete sorowe helde it in distresse
So fulle it was of beaute with pleasaunce
Anone after dynen gan they to daunce
And song also saue dozrigene allone
Whiche made alwey hez compleynthe and hez mone
For she ne sawe him in the daunce go
That was hez husbonde and her loue also
But neuirthelesse she must hez tyme abyde
And with gode hope lete hez sorowes styde
Vpon this daunce amonge othez men
Daunced a squyer bifoze Dozrigene
That freshez was and iolyer of araye
As to my dome than is the moneth of May
He syngith daunsith passing any othez man
That is or was sithen the worlde began
Therwith he was if men sholde him discryue
One of the best fayryst men on lyue
Ponthe stronge vertuous riiche and wise

The Frankeleyns Tale

And wele beloued and holden in grette pryce
And shortly if I the soth tel shalle
On wyttynge of this Dozygene at alle
This lusty squyer seruaunt to Venus
Whiche that cleppd was aurelius
Hath loued hez best of any creature
Two yere and more as was his anenture
But neuir durst he telle hez his grenaunce
Withoute the cuppe dranke he alle his penaunce
He was despayred nothing durst he say
Saue in his songes somdele wolde he wrey
His wo as in a general compleynyng
He sayde he louyd and was beloued nothing
Of suche matez made he many layes
Songes compleyntes roundels virelayes
How that he durst nat his sorowe tel
But languyng as a fury doth in helle
And dre he sayde he must as dpyd Echo
For Narcisus that durst nat telle his woo
In othez maner than ye here now say
Ne durst he nat his wo to hez be wray
Saue parauenture at festes and at daunses
There yong folke heppyn theire obseruaunses
It may wele been he lohed in hez face
In suche a wise as men that asken grace
But nothing wist she of his entent
Neirthelesse it happed oz they thens went
Bicause that he was hez nythboure
And was a man of worshippe and honoure
And hadde knowen him of tymes yore
They fallen in speche and so more and more
In to his purpos drewe Aurilius
And whan he sawe his tyme he sayde thus

The Frankeleyns Tale

Madame quod he by god that this worlde made
So that I wylst I myght poure herte gladde
I wolde that day that poure Arueragus
Went ouer the see. that I Aurelius
Hadde gone there I sholde neuiz come agayn
For wele I wote my seruyce is in bayne
My guerdon is but brestyng of myn hert
Madame rewe on my peynes smert
For with one worde ye may me sleen or saue
Here at poure feet wolde god I were begraue
I ne haue as now nomore leysse to say
Haue mercy swete and do me nat to dye
She gan toloke vpon this aurelius
Is this poure wyl quod she and say ye thus
Neuiz erst quod she ne wylst I what ye ment
But nowe Aurelye I knowe poure entent
By that god that gaue me soule and lyf
Ne shal I neuiz be vntrewe wylf
In worde ne in werkes as fer as I haue wyl
I wyl be his to whome that I am knyghte
Take this for fynalle aunswere as for me
But after than in pley thus sayde she
Aurelye sayde she by high god aboue
yet wol I graunt you to be poure loun
Sithen I se you so pytously complayne
Loke what day that endlong brytaine
ye remene alle the rockes stone by stone
That they ne lette bote ne shippe to gone
I say whan ye haue made the coost so cleene
Of rockes that there is no stone y seen
Than wol I loun you best of any man
Haue here my trouthe in alle that euiz I can
Is ther none othez grace in poure honde quod he

The Frankeleyns Tale

No by that forde quod she that maketh me
For wel I wote that it shalle neuir betyde
Let suche foly oute of youre hert a styde
What depnte sholde a man haue in his lyf
For to loue another manns wyf
That hath her body whan so that him lykith
Aureolus ful ofte soze siketh
Wo was Aurel whan that he this herd
And with a sorouful hert he thus answerd
Madame quod he this were impossible
Than must I dye in soden deth horrible
And with that worde he turned him anone
Tho cam her frendes many one
And in the aleys roumed by and down
And nothing wiste of this conclusioun
And sodenly begonnen reuel ne we
Tyl the bright sonne lost his he we
For the orison had rest the sonne his light
This is a smoch to say as it was nyght
And home they gone in iope and in solas
Saue only wretched Aureolus allas
He to his house is gone with sorouful hert
He sayeth that he ne may from his deth astert
Him semeth that he felith his hert colde
Vnto heuyng his hondes he gan holde
And on his knees baze he set him down
And in raupng sayde this orison
For berry woo oute of his wytte he brayde
He nyf what he spake but thus he sayde
With pitous hert his pleynt hath begonne
Vnto the goddes and first vnto the sonne
He sayde apollo god and gouernoure
Of euery plante herbe tre and floure

The Frankleyns Tale

That preuest after thy dectynacion
Torche of them his tyme and his season
And thyn herborowe chaungith lowe and hys
Forde phebus cast thy mercyable eye
On wretched Aurely whiche am but loyn
Forlorde my lady hath my deth sworn
Withou ten gyfte but thy benygnyte
Upon my dedely herte haue some pyte
But wele I wote forde phebus if ye lyst
ye may me helpe saue my lady best
Now bouche sauf that I may you deuyse
How that I may be holpen and in what wise
poure blissful sustyr Lucina the shene
That of the see chief goddesse is and quene
Though neptunus haue depte in the see
yet Emprresse aboue him is she
ye knowe wele forde right as her desire
Is to be quychned and lyghned of youre fyre
for whiche she folowith you ful besylly
Right so the see desireth naturally
To folowe her and she that is goddesse
Bothe in the see and ryuers moze and lesse
Wherfore forde phebus this is my requeest
Do this myracle or do myn herte brest
That nowe next at this opposicioun
Within whiche signe shalle be the lyoun
As prayeth her so grette a flode to brynge
That fyue fadom at the leest it ouer sprynge
The hyest roche in Armorye Britayne
And let this flode endure peres twayne
Than certis to my lady may I say
holdith youre heest the roches be a way
Forde phebus this myracle do for me

The Franklyn's Tale

Pray hez that she go no faster cours than ye
I say thus praye youre suster that she go
No faster course than ye in yeres two
Than shal she be at euyn ful alwey
And sprynge flode last both nyght and day
And but ye bouchshauf in suche manere
To graunt me my souerayne lady dere
Pray hez to synke euery roche a down
Into helle theire owne derke mansioun
Vndre the grounde there plato duellith in
Dz neuiz mo shal I my lady Wynne
The temple in delphos wol I barfote seke
Lord phebys se the teres on my cheke
And of my payne haue some compassioun
And with that worde in swoun he fyl a down
And long tyme he lay forth in a traunce
His brother whiche that knewe his penauce
Vp caught him and to bedde hath him brought
Despeyred in this turment and in his thought
Lete I this woful creature lye
The se he whether he wol lye or dye
Arneragus with hele and honoure
As he that was of cheualry the floure
Is comyn home and othez worthy men
A blissful arte thou nowe Dorrigen
That hast thy blissful husbond in thy armes
The fresche knyght the worthy man of armes
That loueth the as his herteself
No thing ne lyst he to be ymagynatyf
If any wyght hadde spoke whyles he was oute
To hez of loue therof hadde he no doute
He nat entendith to no suche matere
But daunsith iustith and makith gode chere

The Frankleyns Tale

And thus in ioye and blisse I let them duelle
And of the seke Aurelius wol I telle
In langure and in turment furious
Two yere and more ley this Aurelius
Dr any foote he myght on erthe gone
Ne comforte in this tyme hadde he none
Saue of his brothez whiche was a clerke
He kne we alle this wo and alle this werke
For to none othez creature certayne
Of this matere he durst no worde seyne
Vndre his brest he bare it more secre
Than euir dyd pamphilus for gala the
His brest was hole withoute for to seen
But in his hert ay was the arowe hene
As wele ye knowe of a surfature
In surgery ful perous is the cure
But men myght touche the arowe or come ther by
His brothez wepith and wayleth pryuelly
Tyl at the last him syl in remembraunce
That whiles he was at Dyraunce in fraunce
As yong clerkes that been lyherous
To rede artes that been curpous
Selyn in euery halke and euery herne
Particuler sciences for to lerne
He him remembred that spon a day
In Dyraunce in his studye a boke he say
Of magpye naturalle whiche his sclaue
That was that tyme a bachelez of laue
Had pryuelly spon his deshe last
Al were he there to lern a nothez craft
Whiche boke spake moche of operaciouns
Touchyng the eyght and twenty mansiouns
That longen to the mone and suche soly

The Franklyn's Tale

Pray hez that she go no faster cours than ye
I say thus praye youre sustre that she go
No faster course than ye in peres two
Than shal she be at euyn ful alwey
And sprynge flode last both nyght and day
And but ye vouchshauf in suche manere
To graunt me my souerayne lady dere
Pray hez to synke euery roche a doun
Into helle theire owne derke mansioun
Vndre the grounde there plato duellith in
Oz neuiz mo shal I my lady Wynne
The temple in delphos wol I barfote seke
Lord phebys se the teres on my cheke
And of my payne haue some compassioun
And with that worde in swoun he fyl a doun
And long tyme he lay forth in a traunce
His brother whiche that knewe his penauce
Up caught him and to bedde hath him brought
Despeyred in this turment and in his thought
Lete I this woful creature lye
These he whet he wol lye or dye
Arueragus with hele and honoure
As he that was of cheualry the floure
Is comyn home and othez worthy men
A blissful arte thou nowe Dorrigyn
That hast thy blissful husband in thy armes
The freshe knyght the worthy man of armes
That loueth the as his herteslyf
No thing ne lyst he to be ymagynatyf
If any wight hadde spoke whiles he was oute
To hez of loue therof hadde he no doute
He nat entendith to no suche matere
But daunsiyth iustith and makith gode there

The Franklyn's Tale

and thus in ioye and blisse I let them duelle
And of the seke Aurelius wol I telle
In langure and in turment furious
Twe pere and more ley this Aurelius
Or any foote he myght on erthe gone
Ne comforte in this tyme hadde he none
Saue of his brothez whiche was a clerke
He knewe alle this wo and alle this werke
For to none othez creature certayne
Of this matere he durst no worde seyne
Vndre his brest he bare it more secre
Than euir dyd pamphilus for gala the
His brest was hole withoute for to seen
But in his hert ay was the arowe hene
As wele ye knowe of a sursaure
In surgery ful perous is the cure
But men myght touche the arowe or come therby
His brothez wepeth and wayleth pruely
Tyl at the last him syl in remembraunce
That whiles he was at Disaunce in fraunce
As yong clerkes that been lytherous
To rede artes that been curpous
Schyn in euery halke and euery herne
Particuler sciences for to lerne
He him remembred that vpon a day
In Dispaunce in his studie a boke he say
Of magyke naturalle whiche his felawe
That was that tyme a bachelez of la we
Had pruely vpon his deshe last
Al were he there to lern a nothez craft
Whiche boke spake moche of operaciouns
Touchyng the eyght and twenty mansiouns
That longen to the mone and suche solp

The Franklyn's Tale

As in oure daies is nat worth a fye
For holy chirche sayeth in oure beleue
Ne suffreth nat illusioun be to greue
And whan this boke was in remembrance
Anone for ioye his hert gan to daunce
And to him selue he sayde pryvely
My brother warisshe shal be hastely
For I am spyker that ther be sciences
By whiche men make diuerse apparences
Suche as the se subtel treggetours pley
For ofte at festes haue I herde sey
That treggetours within an halle large
Haue made come in a water and a barge
And in the halle rowen vp and doun
Some tyme hath semed come a grete spoun
And some tyme floures sprynge in a mede
Some tyme a vyne and grapes white and rede
Some tyme a castel of lyme and stone
And whan he lyketh it boydeth anone
Thus semeth it to many a mannys sight
Now than conclude I thus if I myght
At Diliaunce some olde fela we fynde
That hadde the monys mansiouns in mynde
Or other magpye natural aboue
He sholde wel make my brother haue his loue
For with an apparence a clerke may make
To mannys sight that alle the rockes blak
Of brytayne were boyded euerichone
And shippes by the brynkes comyn and gone
And in suche fourme endure a woke or two
Than were my brother warisshe of his wo
Than muste she nedes holde her behest
Or elles he shal shame her at the lest

The Franklyn's Tale

What sholde I make a lenggere tale of this
Unto his Brothers bedde y come he is
And such comferte he yave him for to goon
To Deliaunce that he by stert anon
And on his wey than on warde is he fare
In hope for to be lpyssed of his care
Whan they were come almoost to that cyte
But if it were a two furlong or thre
A pong clerke rompyng by him selue they mette
Whiche that in latyn thristely them grette
And after that he sayde a wondre thing
I knowe quod he the cause of youre compyng
And or they furthel any fote went
He tolde them alle what was theire entent
This Brytoun clerke him asked of felawes
The whiche he hadde knowen in olde daies
And he aunswerde him that they dede were
For whiche he wept ful many a tere
Doun of his horse Aurelius light anon
And with this magicien forth he gan gone
Home to his house and made them wele at ease
Them lacked no bytyle that them myght please
So wele arayed house as there was one
Aurelius in his lyf sawe neuiz none
He shewde them or he went to souper
Forestes parkes ful of wylde dere
There sawe he hertes with theire hornes hye
The gretest that were euiz sepe with eye
He sawe of them an hundreth slayne with houndes
And some of arowes blede and bytter woundes
He sawe whan boyded were the se wylde dere
The falconers spon a fayre rpuer
That with theire haukes haue the herons slayne

The frankefynes Tale

Tho sawe he knyghtes iustynge in a pleyne
And after this he dyd him suche plesaunce
That he him shewyd his lady in a daunce
In whiche him selue dauuced as him thought
And whan this maister that this magpye wroughe
Sawe it was tyme he clapped his hondes to
And fare wele al oure reuel was y do
And yet remeued they neuiz oute of the house
While they sawe al this sight meruaylous
But in his stody there his bokes be
They sytten styll and no wight but they thre
To him this mapster called his squyer
And sayde him thus is redy oure souper
Almoost an houre it is I undertake
Syn I you hadde oure souper for to make
Whan that these worthy men went with me
Into my stodye there my bokes be
Sir quod the squyer whan it lyketh you
It is al redy though ye wol right now
Go we than souper quod he it is for the best
These amorous folke somtyme must haue rest
And after souper fyl they in trefte
What sūme sholde the mapsters guerdon be
To remeue alle the rocks in brytayne
And eke from geronde to the mouth of sayne
He made him straunge he swore so god him saue
Lesse than a thousand ponde he wolde nat haue
Ne gladly for that sūme he wold nat gone
Aurelius with blisful hert anone
Sayth thus fy on a thousand ponde
The wyde worlde which men say is rounde
I wolde it pene if I were lord of it
This bargayne is ful dryue and ful knytte

The Frankleyns Tale

ye shal be payd truly by my trouthe
But lokeith now for none negligence ne slouth
ye tarp be here no lengere than to morowe
Nay quod the clerke haue here my sayth to borowe
To bed he goth Aurelius whan him lest
And wele nyght alle that nyght he hadde rest
what for his labour and for his hope of blisse
his woful herte of penaunce hadde a lyse
Upon the morowe whan it was day
To brytayne toke they the right wey
Aurelius and this magicien him beside
And he descended there they wol abyde
And this was as the boke doth remembre
The colde frosty season of Decembre
Phebus weyed olde and he wed lyke latoun
That a fore in his hote declynacioun
Shone as the burned golde with stremes brighte
But now in capricorne a down he lighte
Where as he shone ful pale I dar wele seyn
The bytters frostes with the sylte and rayne
Distroyed hath the grene in euery yerde
Janus sytteth by the fyre with double berde
And drynkieth of his bugle horne the wyne
Bisorn him standith the braun of the tusked swyne
And now he cryeth euery lusty man
Aurelius in alle that euery he can
Doth to his mayster chere and reuerence
And prayeth him to done his diligence
To bring him oute of his peynes smart
Or with a swerde that he wolde syte his hert
This subtil clerke suche routh had of this man
That nyght and day his spedde him that he can
To wayte a tyme of this conclusioun

The Franklynys Tale

This is to say to make illusion
By suche an apparaunt ioghetpe
I can no termes of Astrologye
That she and every wight sholde wene and say
That of Brytayne the roches were a wey
Wherelles they were sonkyn vndre the grounde
So at the last he hath his tyme yf founde
To make his iape and his wretchednesse
Of suche a superstitious cursidnesse
His tables tolentanes forth he brought
Ful wele correctid it lacked nought
Neyther his colet ne his expans peres
Ne his rotis ne his othez peres
As been his centris and his argumentes
And his proporzional conuenientes
For his equacions in every thyng
And by his eyght spere in his workyng
He knewe ful wele how fer alnath was shoue
Fro the hede of that fixe aries aboue
That in the nynthe spere considered is
Ful subtilly he had calked al this
Whan he hadde founde his first mansioun
He knewe the remenaunt by proporzoun
And knewe the rysyng of his mone wele
And in whose face and terme and euerydele
And knewe wel the monys mansioun
Attendaunt vnto his operacioun
And knewe also wele his othez obseruaunces
For suche illusions and suche myschances
As hethen folke hseden in tho dayes
For whiche no lengere makith he delays
But through his magpye for a wohe or tway
It semed that alle the roches were a wey

The Frankelynes Tale

Aurelius yet whiche that dispeyred is
Whether he shalle haue his loue or fare a mys
And wayteth nyght and day on this myracle
And whan he knewe ther was none obstakle
That boydded were the roches echone
Doun to his maisters feet he yrtanon
And sayde I woful wretchyd Aurelius
Thanke you lord and my lady venus
That me haue holped fro my caris colde
And to the temple his wey hath he holde
Where as he knewe he sholde his lady se
And whan he sawe his tyme anone right he
With dredful hert and with humble chere
Salued hath his souerayne lady dere
My right worthy lady quod this woful man
Whom I moost drede and loue as I best can
And lo thest were in alle this worlde displease
Nere it that for you I haue suche disease
That I must dye here at youre fote anon
Nat wol I tel you I am wo beggon
But certis othez I must dye or playne
Ye sle me tyttles for verry peyne
But of my deth though ye haue no routhe
Adurseth you or that ye breke youre trouthe
And repente you for that god aboue
Dy ye me sle bicause that I you loue
For madame ye wote what ye haue highte
Nat that I chalange any thing of right
Of you my souerayne lady but of youre grace
But in the gardyn yondre in suche a place
Ye wote right wele what ye behight me
And in my honde there youre trouthe plight ye
To loue me best god wote ye sayde so

The Frankelynes Tale

Al be it that I bñ worthy be ther to
Madame I speke it for the honoure of you
More than for to saue my hertes lyf right now
I haue do so as ye comaunded me
And if ye vouchsafe ye may go se
Doth as you lyst haue youre heest in mynde
For quicke or dede right there shal ye me fynde
In you lyth alle to do me lyue or deye
But welc I wote the rockes been a wey
He takith his leue and she a stonped stode
In al her face nas there one drope of blode
She wende neuir to come in suche a trapppe
Allas quod she that euer this sholde happe
For wende I neuir by possibylite
That suche a monstre or meruayle myght be
It is ayenst the processe of nature
And home she goth a sorowful creature
For verry feer vnnethes myght she go
She wepith and wayleth a day or two
And swouneth that it routh was to se
But why it was vnto noman tolde she
For oute of town was gone Arueragus
But to her selue she spake and sayde thus
With pale face and sorowfulle chere
In her compleyn te as ye shalle after here
Allas quod she on the fortune I playne
That vñware wrapped hast me in this cheyne
Fro whiche to scape knowe I no socoure
Saue only deth or grete dishonoure
One of these two behoueth me to chese
But neuir thelesse yet hadde I lyuer lese
My lyf than of my body haue a shame
Or knowe my selue fals or lese my name

The Frankeleyns Tale

And with my deth I may be quytte y wys
Rath thez nat many a noble wyf or this
And many a mayde sleyn hez selue alas
Rathet than with thei2 body done a trespaas
yescertis the se stories berith witnesse
Whan threty tyrauntes ful of cursydnesse
Had sleyn fridon in Athenes at the fest
They comaunded his daughters for to arest
And brynge bifo2n them in despyte
Al naked to fulfille theire foule delite
And in theire faders blode they made them dauuce
Upon the pauement god geue them myschaunce
for whiche the wofulle maydens ful of drede
Rathet then they wolde lese theire maydenhede
They been preuely stert into a wellle
And drent them selue as the bokes tel
They of Mecene leten enquire and seke
Of Lacedomy fyfty maydens eke
On whiche they wold haue doon thei2 lichery
But was ther noon of al that company
That she nas slayn and with a glade entent
Thees rather for to dye than for to assent
To be oppressed of hez maydenhede
Why shode I than to dye be in drede
Loke the tyraunt Aristoclydes
That louyd a mayde hight symphalides
Whan hez fadre slayne was on a nyght
Vnto Dyanes temple goth she right
And hent the ymage in hez hondes two
from whiche ymage wolde she neuiz go
No wight the hondes of her myght a race
Tyl she was slepne right in the place
Now sithen that maydens hadde suche despyte

The Frankeleynes Tale

To been defouled with mannys deyte
Wele outht a wyf rather her selue to see
Than be defouled as it thynkith me
What shal I say of Hasdrubalds wif
That at Cartage becraft her selue her lyf
Whan that she sawe the Romaynes wan the toun
Se toke her children alle and shipped a doun
Into the fyre and chose rather to dye
Than that any Romayne dyd her belouye
Hath nat Lucrece slayne her self alas
At Rome for that she oppressed was
Of tarquyne for her thought it was a shame
To lyue whan she hadde loste her name
The seyn mapdens of Mellesse also
Haue slayne them selue for her drede and wo
Rather than the folke of galle sholde them oppresse
Mo than a thousand stozes as I gesse
Coude I telle as touchyng this matere
Whan Abradate was slepyne .his wif so dere
Her selue slough and sete her blode to glyde
In Abradates woundes depe and wyde
And sayde my body at the lest wey
Thez shalle no wight defoule if I may
What shal I of them moo ensamples sayne
Sithen that so many haue them selue slayne
Wele rather than they wold defouled be
I wol conclude that it is the best for me
To sle my self than be defouled thus
I wol be true vnto Arueragus
Or elles sle my selue in some manere
Ryght as dyd Democenes doughter dere
Bicause she ne wolde defouled be
O Cedasus it is ful grete pyte

The Frankeleyns Tale

To rede hou thy doughter dyed alas
That slough her selue in suche a maner caas
As grete pyte it was or wele more
The theban mayden that for Nichamore
Her self slough right for suche maner wo
And another theban mayden dyd right so
For one of macedone had her ouir pressed
She with her deeth her maydenhede redressed
What shal I say of Niceratis wyf
That for suche a caas becraft her selue her lyf
How true she was also Alcebeades
That for his loue to dye rather ches
Than for to suffre his body vnburied to be
To whiche a wyf was Alceste also quod she
What sayeth Dmire of gode Penelope
Al grece knowith of her chastite
Parde of Lacedomea is writen thus
That whan at troie was sleyn prothoselaus
Nolengere wolde she lyue aftir his day
The same of noble porcyra tel I may
Withoute Brutus coude she neuir lyue
To whome she hadde her hert alle yue
The parfyte wyshode of Arthemecpe
Honoured is through oute alle Barbarpe
D tenta que ne thy wysly chastite
To alle wyues may a myrroure be
The same thing I say of Belyea
Of Rodogone and che Balerpa
Thus pleyneith Dorrigene a day or twey
Purposyng euir that she wolde dye
But neuir thelfe she vpon the thrydde nyght
Home cometh Arueragus the worthy knyght
And askith her why that she wepith so sore

The Frankeleyns Tale

And she gan wepe euir lenger the more
Alas quod she the tyme that I was born
Thus haue I sayde quod she thus haue I sworn
And tolde him alle the raas by and by
How she hadde promysed ignorantly
The squyr as ye haue herde to fore
It nedith nat to reherce it any more
This husbonde with glade chere in frendly wise
Answerde and sayde as I shalle deuyse
Is there aught elles Dorigene but this
Nay nay she sayde god helpe me so as wys
This is to mehyl and it were goddes wyl
ye wis quod he lat sleppyn that is styll
It may be wele yet perauenture to day
ye shalke poure trouthe holde by my say
For god so wysly haue mercy on me
I hadde wele lyuez styched for to be
For very loue whiche I to you haue
But ye sholde poure trouthe kepe and saue
Trouthe is the higheest thing that man may kepe
But with that worde he brast anon to wepe
And sayde I you forbode on peyne of deth
That neuir while you lastith lyf or breth
To no wight to telle of this mysauenture
As I may best I wol my wo endure
Ne make no contaunce of heuynesse
That folke of you may deme harme or gesse
And forth he clepith a squyer and a mayde
Go forth anone with Dorigene he sayde
And bring her to suche a place anon
They toke theire leue and on theire wey they gon
But they ne wist why she thidre went
He wolde no wight telle his entent

The frankeleyns Tale

Parauenture an hepe of you þwys
Wyl holden him a lewde man in this
That he wol put his wif in ieopardy
Her kynth the tale or ye on him crye
She may haue bettre fortune than you semeth
And whan that ye haue herde the tale. demeth
This squere whiche that hight Aurelius
On Dorrigene that was so amorous
Of auenture happed her to mete
Amongde the toun right in the quychest strete
As she wolde gone the wey forth right
Toward the gardeyne there as she hadde hight
And he was to the gardyn warde also
For wele he spyed whan she wolde go
Oute of her house to any maner place
But thus they meten by auenture and grace
And he salueth her with glade entent
And asked of her whither warde she went
And she answerd half as she wee madde
Unto the the gardyn as my husbonde badde
My trouthe for to holde alas alas
Aurelius gan to wondre in this caas
And in his hert hadde grete compassioun
Of her chere and of her lamentacioun
And of Arueragus the worthy knyght
That badde her holde that she hadde hight
So lothe him was if she sholde breke her trouthe
And in his herte he caught of this grete routh
Consideryng the best on euery syde
That from that lnt yet were him lyuer abyde
Than to do so high a folysshe wretchydnesse
Apenst fraunchise and gentylnesse
For whiche in fewe wordes sayde he thus

The Frankeleyns Tale

Madame say to poure lord Arueragus
That sithen I se his grete gentylnesse
To you and eke I se poure grete distresse
That him were lyuez haue shame & that were routhe
Than ye to me thus holde breke poure trouthe
I haue wele lyuez euir to suffre woo
Than I departe the loue bitwix you & wo
I you relese madame into poure honde
Dypte euery surement and euery bonde
That ye haue made to me as here bifore
Sithen that tyme that ye were first born
My trouthe I plight I shal you neuiz reпреef
Of none behest and here I take my leue
As of the tre west and eke the best wyf
That euir yet I knewe in alle my lyf
But euery wif be ware of her behest
On Dorrigene remembreth at the lest
Thus can a squyer do a gentyl dede
As wele as can a knyght withouten drede
She thankith him spon her knees al bare
And home to her husbonde is she fare
And tolde him al as ye haue herde me sayde
And be ye spheze he was wele apayed
That it were impossible me to write
What sholde I lengere of this raas endyte
Arueragus and Dorrigene his wif
In souerayne blisse ledyn forth theire lyf
Neuiz after was there angre them bitwene
He cherissed her as though she were a quene
And she was trewe to him for euir more
Of these two folke ye get of me nomore
Aurelius that his cost hath al forlorn
Cur sith the tyme that euir he was born

The Frankleyns Tale

allas allas quod he that I behighe
Of pured gorde a thousand pounde wyth
Vnto this Philosopher hou shal I do
I se nomore but that I am fordo
My heritage I must nedes selle
And be a beggar here I may nat duelle
And schamp alle my kynrede in this place
But I of him may gete som grace
But nathelless I wol of him assay
At certayne peres and daies to pay
And thanke him of his grette curtesye
My trouthe wyl I kepe I wol nat lye
With hert soze he goth vnto his cofre
And brought gold vnto this philosophre
The value of fyue hundred pounde I gesse
And him beseked of his gentylnesse
To graunte him daies of the remenaunt
And sayde mayster I dar wele make auaunt
I sayled neuiz of my trouthe as yet
For schirly my dette shal wele be quyt
Toward you hou euir that I fare
To go a beggyn in my kyrtel bare
But if ye wolde wouche sauf on suretye
Two yere or thre for to respyte me
Than were I wele for elles must I selle
My heritage ther is no more to telle
This philosophre sobyrly aunswerde
And sayde thus whan he his wordes herde
Haue I nat holde couenaunt vnto the
Presertis wele and truly quod he
Hast thou nat had thy lady as the lryketh
No no quod he and sorowfully he siketh
What was the cause telle me if thou can

The Franklynys Tale

Aurelius anon his tale began
And tolde him al as ye haue herde bi fore
It nedith nat to reherce it you more
He sayde Arueragus of gentylnes
Hadde leuyr to dye in sorowe and in distres
Than that his wyf were of her trouthe fals
The sorowe of Dozrigene he tolde him als
How loth her were to be a wyched wyf
And that she hadde leuyr haue lost her lyf
And her trouthe she swore through innocence
She neuir erst herde speke of apparence
That made me to haue in her so grete pyte
And right as frely as he sent her to me
As frely sent I her home to him agayn
This is al and some there is no more to sayne
This philosopher aunswerde leue brother
Eueriche of you dyd gentylnesse to othez
Thou art a squire and he is a knyght
But god forbede for his blissful myght
But a clerke coude do as gentyl a dede
As wele as any of you it is no drede
Sir I relese the thy thousand ponde
As nowe thou were copen oute of the grounde
Ne neuir oz nowe ne haddest knowen me
For sir I wol nat take a peny of the
For alle my craft ne for my trauayle
Thou hast wele payde for my bytaye
It is ynough fare wele and haue gode day
And toke his horse and forth he goth his wey
Lordynges this question than aske I you
Whiche was the moost fre as thynkith you
Now tellith me oz that ye further wende
I can no more my tale is at an ende

The wyf of Bathes prologue

Here endith the Fraunhlepys tale
And folowith the prologe of the wyf of Bathe



e xperience though none auctorite
were in this worlde is right ynough for me
To speke of wo that is in mariage
But lordes sithen I t welue yere was of atte
Thanked be god that is eternalie on lyue
husbondes at the chirche dore haue I had syue
If I so ofte myght haue wedded be
And al were worthy men in theire degre
But me was tolde nat long ago y wys
That sithen crist went nauir but onys
To weddynyng in the Cane of galile
That by the same ensample taught he me
That I ne wedded shulde be but onys
foe whiche a sharpe worde for the nones
Beside a welle Jesus god and man

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

Spake in reproof of the samaritan
Thou hast had fyue husbondes sayd he
And that ilke man that now hath the
Is nat thy husbonde thus he sayde certayne
What he ment therby I can nat sayn
But that I aske why the fyfte man
Was nat husbonde to the samaritan
How many myght he haue in mariage
yet herde I neuir tellen in myn age
Of this nombre berz diffinicion
Men may deme and glose by and down
But wele I wote expresse withouten lye
That god had vs wey and multiplie
That gentyl texte can I wele vnderstonde
Eke wele I wote he sayde that myn husbonde
Sholde leue fader and modre and take to me
But of nombre no mencion made he
Of byttamye or of octogamye
Why sholde men speke of it belonpe
Lo here the wyse kyng dauid Salamon
I trowe he had wyues mo than one
As wolde to god it leful were to me
To haue refresshyng half so oft as he
Whiche a pest of god had he for al his wyues
Noman hath suche that in this worlde on lyue is
God wote this noble king as to my wytte
The first nyght had many a mery fyfte
With eche of them so wele was him on lyue
ye blessyd be god that I haue hadde fyue
Of whiche I haue pyched oute the best
Bothe of theire neyther purse and eke theire chest
Dyuerse scoles makith parfyte clerkes
And dyuerse practyse in many sondry werkes

The wyf of Bathes prologue

gahith the werkman parfytte fikerly
Of fyue husbondes scolpnyng am I
Welcome the sixte whan that euir he shal
forsoth I wyl nat kepe me chaste in al
whan my husbonde is fro the worlde y gone
Some cristen man shal wedde me anone
for the appostole sayth that I am fre
To wedde a goddes half where it lyketh me
he sayth to be wedded it is no synne
Better it is to be wedded than to brenne
what rethith me though men say belony
Of shrewde I ameth and of his bygamyne
I wote Abraham was a ful holy man
And eke Jacob as fer as euir I here can
And eke of them hadde mo wyues than two
And many a nother holy man also
where can ye say in any maner age
That euir god defended mariage
By expresse wordes I pray you telle me
D: where comaunded he euir virgynite
I woot as wele as ye it is no drede
The appostel whan he spake of madynhede
he sayde that therof precept hadde he none
Men may counseyle a woman to be one
But counseyl is no maner comaundment
he puttith that in oure owne iugement
for hadde god comaunded madynhede
Than had he dampned weddyng oute of drede
And certis if there nere no fede y solwe
Virgynite what sholde therof growe
Paule durst nat comaunde at the leste
a thing whiche his mayster paue none heste
The darte is set spon virgynite

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

Cache who so may who rennyth best let se
But this worde is nat take of euery wight
But there as god wol pene it of his myght
I wote wele the appostel was a mayde
But natheles though he wrote and sayde
He wolde euery wight were suche as he
Al is but counseyl to birgynite
And for to be a wyf he pauer me leue
Of indulgence so it be nat to repreue
To wedde me if that my make dye
Withoute exceptioun of bygamyne
Al were it gode no woman for to touche
He ment in his bedde or in his couche
For perel it is fyre and towe to assemble
ye knowe what this ensample may resemble
This is al and some he helde birgynite
More parfyte than weddyng in freelte
Freelte clepe I but if that he or she
wolde leden al their lyf in chastite
I graunt it wele I haue none enuye
Though maydenhede preferre bygamyne
It lyketh them to be cleane in body and goost
Of myn estate I wol make no boost
ful wele I knowe a lorde in his householde
Hath nat euery vessel of siluer and of golde
Some been of tre and done their lorde seruise
God clepith to him folke in sondry wyse
And eche hath of god a propre pest
Som this som that as him lyst to shypst
Virgynite is a grete perfectioun
And contynence eke with deuocioun
But crist that is of perfectioun the welle
Bad nat euery wight he sholde go selle

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

alle that he hath and geue it to the poure
And in suche wyse folowe him and his fore
He spake to him that wyf byue parfytly
And lordynges by poure leue that am nat I
I wol bestowe the floure of alle myn age
In the actes and in the frute of mariage
Tel me also to what conclusioun
Were membres made of generacioun
And of so parfyte wyse a wight y wroughte
Trust me wel thei be nat made for naughte
Glose who so wol and say by and doun
That thei were made for purgacioun
Of vyrgyne and of othere thinges smale
Was eke to knowe a female from a male
And for no cause elles say ye no
The experience wote wel it is nat so
So that the clerkes with me be nat wrothe
I say thus that thei be made for lothe
That is to say bothe for office and for ease
Of engendrure there we god nat displease
Why shulde nat elles men in bokes sette
That man shal paye to his wyf her dette
Where with sholde he make his payement
If he ne used his self instrument
Then were thei made upon a creature
To purge him and eke to engendre
But I say nat that euery wight is holde
That hath suche harneys as I to you tolde
To go and use them in engendrure
Than sholde men of chastite take no cure
Crist was a mayde and shapen as a man
And many a saynt sithen the worlde began
yet lyued they euyr in parfyte chastite

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

But I nyl enuye non birtynite
Let them with brede of pured whete be fedde
And let to us wyues hote barle brede
And yet with barlee brede as marke tel can
Dure lordes Iesus refreshed many a man
In suche estate as god hath clepyd us
I wyl perseuere I am nat precious
In wyfshode wyl I vse myn instrument
As frely as my makez hath it sent
If I be daungerous god geue me sorowe
Myn husbonde shal it haue both eue and morowe
Whan that him lyst come forth and pay his dette
An husbonde wol I haue I wol nat lette
That shal be bothe my dettoure and my thral
And haue his tribulacioun with al
Upon his flesshe while that I am his wyf
The power I haue durynge alie my lyf
Bothe of his propir body and nat he
Right thus the appostel tolde it me
And bad oure husbondes for to loue us wele
Al this sentence me lyncheth euerydele
Up stert the pardoner and that anone
Now dame quod he by god and by seynt John
ye be a noble prechoure in this caas
I was aboute to wedde a wyf alas
What sholde I by it on my flesshe so dere
yet hadde I yue wedde no wyf this yere
Abyde quod she my tale is nat begonne
May thou haue drynke of another tonne
Or that I go shal sauoure werse than ale
And whan I haue tolde forth my tale
Of tribulacioun that is in mariage
Of whiche I am expert in al myn age

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

This is to say my self haue be the whippe
Than mayst thou chese whether thou wylt sippe
Of that tonne that I the shal broche
Be ware of it oz thou to nyght approche
For I shalle telle ensamples mo than ten
Who so wol nat be ware by othez men
By him shal othez men corrected be
These same wordes writeth prytholome
Rede in his almeget and take it there
Dane I wolde praye you if poure wyl were
Sayde this pardonere as he began
Tel forth poure tale spare for no man
And teche vs yong men of poure practyse
Gladly quod she sithen it may you lyke
But that I pray to alle this company
If that I speke after my fantesye
As take nat a greif of that I say
For myn entent is but for to play
Now sires than wol I telle you forth my tale
As euery I must drynke wyne oz ale
I shal say soth these husbondes that I hadde
Thre of them were gode and two were badde
The thre men were gode and riche and olde
Wherewith myght they the statute holde
In whiche they were bounden vnto me
Ye wote wele what I mene parde
As helpe me god I laugh whan that I thynke
How pytously a nyght I made them to swynke
And by my fayth I yaued of them no store
They hadde me yere theire sonde and theire tresore
He nedith nat to do them lengere diligence
To wynne theire loue oz do them reuerence
They loued me so wele by god aboue

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

That I ne tolde no deynte of her loue
A Wyse Woman wol besy her eir in one
To gete her loue ye there she hath none
But sithen I hadde them holly in myn honde
And after they had geue me theire londe
What sholde I take hepe them for to please
But if it were for my profet or for myn ease
I helde them so a werke by my sey
That many a nyght they song wele a wey
The bacon was nat fet for them I trowe
That som man hath in Essex at donmowe
I gouerned them so wele after my lawe
That eche of them ful blisful was and faue
To brynge me gay thynges fro the fayre
They were ful fayne whan I spake to them fayre
For god it wote I chydde them spytouste
Now herke hou I bare me propirly
ye wise wyues that can vnderstonde
Thus sholde ye speyn and bere them on honde
For half so holdly can there no man
Swere and lye as a woman can
I say nat this by wyues that been wyse
But if it be whan they them mysauyse
A wyse wyf if that she can her gode
Shal bere him on honde the cow is wode
And take wytnesse of her owen mayde
Of her assent but herketh what I sayde
Syr olde haynard is this thyng aray
Why is my nythboures wyf so gay
She is honoured where euer she goth
I spte at home and haue no thrifty cloth
What dost thou at my nythboures house
Is she so fayre art thou so amorousse

The wyf of Bathes prologue

What rownest thou with a mayde benedicite
Sir olde lechoure let thy iapes be
And if that I haue a gossoppe or a frende
Withouten gylte thou chydest as a frende
That I walke and pley vnto his house
Thou comest home as dronken as a mouse
And prechest on thy benche with euyl preef
Thou sayst to me it is a grete myscheif
To wedde a poure woman for costage
And if she be riche of high parage
Thou sayst that it is a berzy turmentry
To suffre her pryde and her melancoly
And if she be fayre thou berzy knaue
Thou sayst that euery holoure wol her haue
She may no while in chastite abyde
That is assayled on euery syde
Thou sayst some folke desire vs for richesse
Som for oure shappe and som for oure fayrnesse
And som for she can othez synge or daunce
And som for gentylnesse or for daliaunce
Som for her bondes and her armes smale
Thus goth alle to the deuyll by the tale
Thou sayst men may nat kepe a castel walle
It may so long assayled be ouir alle
And if she be foule thou sayst that she
Couetyth euery man that she may se
For as a spaynel she wolde on him lepe
Tyl she may fynde som man her to chepe
Ne none so gryp goos goth thez in the lake
As sayst thou wol be withoute her make
And sayst it is an harde thyng for to wolde
A thyng that noman wol his thanke holde
Thus sayst thou bozelle whan thou gost to bedde

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

And that no wise man nedith for to wedde
Ne noman that entendith vnto leyn
With wyfde thundre dynte and fyre leyn
Moote thyng welked necke be to broke
Thou sayst a droppynge house and eke smoke
And chydynge wyues maken men flee
Dute of theire houses atones a benedicite
What ayleth suche an olde man for to chyde
Thou sayst we wyues wyl oure bices hyde
Tyl we be fast and than we wol them she we
Wele may that be a prouerbe of a shre we
Thou sayst that open asses horse and houndes
They been assayed of dyuers stoundes
Ba synslauers oz that men them bye
Spones stoles and alle othez husbondrye
And so by pottes clothes and aray
But folke of wyues make none assay
Tyl they be weddyd toolde d o tarde shre we
And than sayst thou we wol oure byces she we
Thou sayst also that it displeasith me
But if thou wylt preyse my beaute
And but thou poure alday in my face
And clepe me fayre dame in euery place
And but thou make a fest that ilke day
That I was born and me freshe and gay
And but thou do to my noyze honoure
And to my chambre within my boure
And to my faders folke and myn alpes
Thou sayst thou olde barrellie ful of lyes
And also for that oure apprentice Jankyn
For his crispe herys shynnyng as golde fyne
And for he squyreth me bothe by and down
yet hast thou caught a false suspicion

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

I wyl him nat though thou were dede to mozo we
But tel me this why hydest thou with sozo we
The keyes of thy cheste a wey fro me
As wele it is my gode as thy parde
What wenyst thou to make an ydiote of oure dame
Now by that lorde that clepyd is saynt Jame
Thou shalt nat both though thou were wode
Be mapster of my body and of my gode
That one thou shalt forgo magre thy eyen
What nedith the of me to enquire oz pryen
I trowe thou woldest loke me in thy chest
Thou sholdest say gode wyf go where ye lyst
Take poure disporte I wyl leue no takes
I knowe you for a true wyf dame Alis
Weloue no man that takith kepe oz charge
Where that we go we wol be at oure large
Of al maner men y blessid moot he be
The wyse Astrologgen dan protholome
That sayeth right thus in his almege st
Of alle men his wysdome is the best
That reckith nat who hath the worlde in honde
By this prouerbe thou shalt vnderstonde
Haue thou ynough what dar the reck. oz care
hou merely that othez folkes fare
for certis olde dotardes by poure leue
ye shal haue quente ynogh at eue
for he is to grete a negart that wol werne
A man to light a candel at his lantern
he shal neuiz haue the lesse light parde
Haue thou ynough thou dar nat pleyne the
Thou sayst also if that we make vs gay
With clothing oz with precious aray
That it is peryl of oure chastite

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

And with sorowe thou must enforzen the
And say these wordes in the apostoles name
In habyte made with chastite and shame
ye women shal appareyلة you quod he
And nat in tressed here and riche perze
As perles ne with golde ne clothes riche
After thy texte ne after thy rubryche
I wyl nat worche as moche as a knat
Thou sayst thus I walke oute as a cat
But who so wol senge the cattes shyn
Than wyl the cat duelle in his in
And if the cattes shyn be slyke and gay
She wol nat duelle in his house half a day
But forth she wol oz any day be dawed
To she we her shyn and go a catirwa wid
This is to say if I be gay sir shrewe
I wol renne oute my bozel for to she we
Syz olde foole what helpith the to espyen
Though thou pley argus with his hundreth eyen
To be my warde corps as he may best
In feyth he shal nat hepe me but me lyst
yet coude I make his berde so mote I the
Thou sayst eke that there be thynges thre
The whiche thynges troublen al the erthe
And that no wight may endure the ferthe
O leue sir shrewe Jesus short thy lyf
yet prechest thou and sayst an hateful wyf
Rehned is for one of these myschaunces
Been there now none othez resemblaunces
That may be lyke poure parables vnto
But if a sely wyf be one of tho
Thou lphnest eke a womannys lone to helle
To bareyn londe there water may nat duelle

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

Thou lyknest besche also to Wylde fyre
The more it brennyth the more it hath desire
To consume euery thyng that brent wolde be
Thou sayst right as Wormys shenden a tre
Right so a Wyf distroyeth her husbonde
This knowen they that been to Wyues bonde
Lordynges right thus as ye haue vnderstonde
Hare I styfly myn olde husbondes on honde
That thus they sayde in theire dronknesse
And alle was fals but as I toke wytnesse
Of Jankyn and of myn nece also
O lord the pyne I dyd them and the wo
ful gyltes by goddes swete pyne
for as an horse I coude byte and whpyne
I coude playne though I were in the gylt
O wylles I hadde oft tymes be spylt
Who so cometh first to the mylle first he grynt
I playned first so were oure werres stynt
They were ful glade for to excuse them blyue
Of thing whiche they neuiz agylted theire lyue
Of wenchis wolde I bere them ful soze on honde
Whan that for suche vnneith myght they stonde
yet tihled I his hert for that he
wende that I of him had so grete cheerte
I swore that alle my walkyng oute by nyght
was for to spy wenchis that he dyght
Vndre that coloure had I many a mirthe
for al suche thyng was true as in oure birthe
Discepte wepyng spynnyng god hath geue
To women kyndly while that they lyue
And thus of one thing I may auunte me
At the ende I haue the better in eche degre
By slepyght or force or by som maner thyng

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

Wi by contynual murmure oz gruchynge
Namely a bedde hadde they myschaunce
There wolde I chynge and do them no plesaunce
I wolde no lengere a bedde abyde
If that I felt his arme ouir my syde
Tyl he hadde made his raunson vnto me
Than wolde I suffre him do his nycte
And therfore euery man this tale I telle
Wyn who so may for alie is for to selle
With empty hondes men may no haukes lure
For wynnyng wolde I alle his lyst endure
And make me than a feyned appetyte
And yet in bacon hadde I neuir despyte
That made me that euir I wolde them chynge
For though the pope hadde sitten them besyde
I wolde nat spare them at theire owne borde
For by my trouthe I quytte them euery worde
As so helpe me god omnypotent
Though I right now sholde make my testament
I owe them nat one worde that it nys quytte
I brought it so aboute by my wytte
That they must yeue it by al for the beste
Welles hadde we neuir be in reste
For though he looked as wyfde as a tyoun
yet shulde he fayle of his conclusioun
Than wolde I say gode leef take hepe
How mekely lohit wyllyn oure shepe
Come nez my spouse let me ha thy cheke
ye sholde be al pacient and meke
And haue a swete spyced conscience
Sithen ye so speke of Jobbes pacience
Suffreth alwey sithen ye can so wele preche
And but ye do certayne we wol you teche

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

It is fayre a man to haue his wyf in pees
One of vs t wo must bowe doubtles
And sithen a man is euir more resonable
Than a woman is pe must be sufferable
What ayleth you to gruche and grone
It is for pe wolde haue my quente alone
Why take it to haue it euerydele
Petz I shrewe you but pe loue it wele
for if I wolde selle my bele chose
I coude walke as freshe as a rose
But I wol hepe it for youre owne tothe
pe be to blame by god I say you sothe
Suche maner wordes hadde we on honde
Now wol I speke of my fourth husbonde
m y fourth husbonde was a reueloure
This is to say he hadde a paramoure
And I was pong and ful of ragery
Styborn and stronge and plyant as a py
Tho coude I daunce vnto an harpe smale
And syng p wys as any nyghtyngale
Whan I hadde dronke a draught of swete wyne
Petullius the foule chorle the swyne
That with a staf beraft his wyf her lyf
for she drank wyne. and I hadde be his wyf
he sholde nat haue daunted me from drynke
And after wyne on venus must I thynke
And also sphe as colde engendreth hayle
Alicorous mouthe must haue a lycerous tayle
In woman bynolent is no defence
This knowen lechoures by experience
But lord Cryst whan it remembreth me
Upon my pouthe and on my iolyte
It tyketh me aboute my herte rote

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

Unto this day it doth myn herte bote
That I haue hadde my worlde as in my tyme
But age allas that al wol enuenym
Hath me beraft my Beaute and my pythe
Let go fare wele the deuyll go ther with
The floure is go ther nys no more to telle
The bren as I best may now must I selle
Now to be right mery wyl I fonde
Now wyl I telle of my fourth husbonde
E say he hadde a grete dyspyte
That I in any othez hadde despyte
But he was quytte by god and by seynt Jose
I made him of the same wode a troce
Nat of my body in no foule manere
But certaynly I made folke suche chere
That in his owne grece I made him frye
For angre and for berz yelousye
By god in erthe I was his purgatoz
For whiche I hope his soule be in glouze
For god it wote he sat ful ofte and song
Whan that his sho ful bytterly him wronge
Ther was no wight saue god and he that wyf
In many wyse hou soze I him twyf
He dyed whan I cam fro ierusalem
And lyeth y graue vndre the rode beem
Al is his tombe nat so curius
As was the sepulcre of him Darius
Whiche that appelles wrought so subtelly
It is but wast to burye him preciously
Let him fare wele god yene his soule gode rest
He is now in his graue and leyde in his chest
n Ow of my fyfte husbonde wyl I telle
God let his soule neuiz come in helle

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

And yet was he to me moost shrew
That fele I on my rybbes alle by rewe
And euiz shalle vnto myn endyng day
But in oure bedde he was ful fresshe and gay
And therewithalle he coude so wele me glose
Whan that he wolde haue my bele chose
That though he hadde bette me on euery bone
He coude wynne my loue agayne anone
I trowe I loued him best for that he
Was of his loue so daungerous vnto me
We women haue if that I shal nat lye
In this matere a queynte fantesye
Wayte what thyng we may nat ryghtly haue
Ther after wyl we crye alday and craue
Forbede vs thyng and desiren we
Prees on vs fast and than wol we fle
With daungez vtter we alle oure chaffare
Grete prees at market makith dere ware
And to grete chepe is holden a lytel pryce
This knowith euery woman that is wyse
m p fyfte husbonde god his soule blesse
Whiche I toke for loue and no richesse
He somtyme was a clerke of Wyenforde
And hadde left scole and went at home to borde
With my gossop tho duellyng in oure toun
God haue hez soule hez name was alysoun
She knewe my hert and eke my pryuete
Bettyr than oure parisshe preeft so moot I the
To her be wyped I my counseyll alle
For hadde myn husbonde pyssed agens a walle
Or do a thyng that he sholde haue coost his lyf
To her and also to a nother worthy wyf
And to my nece whiche that I loued wele

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

I wolde haue tolde his counseyl euerydele
And so I dyd ful ofte god it wote
That made his face ful ofte rede and hote
For berȝy shame and blamed him selue that he
Hadde tolde to me so grette a ppyuite
And so besyl that onys in a lente
So ofte tyme I to my gossop went
For euir I loued to be gay alwey
And for to walke in Marche Apryl and May
Fro house to house to here of sondry tales
That Iankyn clerke and my gossop Dame alys
And I my self into the feldes went
My husbonde was at London al that lene
I hadde the bettre leysur for to pley
And for to see and eke for to be seȝ
Of rusty folke what wylst I where my grace
Was shapen for to be or in what place
Therfore I made my bysitaciouns
To biggles and to processions
To prechynge eke and to pylgramages
To pleyes of myracles and to mariages
And werȝd vpon my gay scarlet gyles
These wormes ne these moȝhes ne these mytes
Vpon my parel frayde them neuir a dele
And wotest thou why for they were vsed wel
Now wol I telle forth what happed me
I say that in the feldes walked we
Tyl truly that we hadde suche daliaunce
This clerke and I that of my purueaunce
I spake to him and sayde that he
If I were wydolwe sholde wedde me
For certayn I say you for no bolaunce
yet was I neuir withoute purueaunce

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

Of mariatge ne othez thynges eke
I holde a mouse herte nat worth a seke
That hath but one hole for to stert to
And if that fayle than is al y do
I bare him on honde he hadde enhaunced me
My dame taught me forsothe that sotelte
And eke I sayde I mette of him al nyght
He wolde haue slayne me as I ley byryght
And al my bidde was ful of berry blode
But yet I hope truly ye schal do me gode
For blode betokneth golde as I was taught
And al was fals I dremed of him right naught
But as I folowed ap my dampnsoure
As wele of that as of othez thynges more
And now sir let me se what sholde I sayn
Aha by god I haue my tale agayn
Whan that my fourth husbonde was on bere
I wepte algate and made a soyr chere
As bynes must for it is the visage
And with my hynchef I ceryd my visage
But for that I was puruyde of a make
I wepte fullytel I dar undertake
To chirche was my husbonde born on morowe
Withoure nyghtbours that for him made sorow
And Janhyn oure clerke was one of tho
As helpe me god whan that I sawe him go
After the bere me thought he hadde a peyre
Of legges and fete so cleene and eke so fayre
That alle my hert I pas into his holde
He was I trowe twenty wynter olde
But I was fourty if I schal say the soth
But yet I hadde alwey a coltes toth
Gappe tothed I was but that becam me wele

The wyf of Bathes prologue

I hadde the prynte of seynt Venus sele
As helpe me god I was a ful lusty one
And fayre and riche and yong and wel bekyne
And truly as my husbondes tolde me
I hadde the best quente that myght be
For certis I am alle fully beneryan
In felyng and in my hert is Marcian
Venus me gaue my lust and lyherousnesse
And Mars gaue me my sturdy hardynesse
My ascendannt was Taure and mars therin
Alas alas that euil loue was synne
I folowed ap myn inclinacioun
By vertue of my constellacioun
That made me that I coude nat withdraue
My chambre of Venus fro a gode felawe
yet haue I Martis marke vpon my face
And also in an othez pryncy place
For god so wysly be my saluacioun
I louyd neuir by no discrecioun
But euil folowed myn appetite
Al were he long shorte blake or white
I toke no hepe so that he lyked me
How poure he was ne eke of what degre
What sholde I say but at the monethes ende
This ioly clerke Jankyn that was sohende
Bath weddyd me with grete solempnyte
And to him gaue I alle londe and fee
That euil was yene me ther bifore
But afterwarde me repented it ful soze
He nolde suffre nothyng of my lyf
By god he smote me onys on the lyf
On the cheke. for I rent oute of his boke a leef
That of the stroke myn ere went al deef

The wyf of Bathes prologue

Styborne I was as is a lyonesse
And of my tunge a veray iangelresse
And walke I wolde as I doon hadde bifore
fro house to house al though he hadde it sworn
for whiche he oft tyme wolde preche
And me of olde Romaunces gestes teche
How the sympliciūs gallus left his wyf
And her forsoke for terme of alle his lyf
Nat but for onys oppynheded he her say
Lohyng oute of his doze spon a day
A nother Romayne tolde he me by name
But for his wyf was at a someres game
Withoute his wytting he forsoke her eke
And than wolde he spon his byble seke
That ilke prouerbe of Ecclesiaste
Where he comaundith and byddeth fast
Men sholde nat suffre their wyues to royle aboute
Then wolde he say thus withouten doute
Who so byldith his house alle of falowes
And prythith his blynde horse ouir the falowes
And suffrith his wyf to seke halowes
Is worthy to be honged on the galowes
But al for naught I set it nat an haue
Of al his prouerbes ne of alle his olde sawe
Ne I wol nat of him corrected be
I hate them that tellen my byres on to me
And so do mo god bote of vs than I
This made hym wode with me al vtterly
I wolde nat forbere him in no caas
Now wol I say you soth by seint Thomas
Why that I rent oute of his boke a leef
For whiche he smote me so that I was dref
He hadde a boke that gladly both nyght and day
t im

The wyf of Bathes prologue

For his disporte he wolde rede alway
He clepyd it Balery and Theophraste
At the whiche boke he lough alwey ful fast
And eke ther was a clerke somtyme in Rome
A cardynalle that hight seynt Jerome
That made a boke apenst Jorpnyan
In whiche boke ther was eke Tortulan
Crisippus Tortala and Helowis
That was Abbesse nat fer from Paris
And eke the paraboles of wyse Salamon
Dydes art and eke bokes many one
And al these were bounde in one bolume
And euery day and nyght was his custume
Whan he hadde leysur and any vacacioun
fro al othez worldy occupacioun
To redyn on this boke of Wyched Wyues
He knewe of them moletendes and lyes
Than be of gode wyues in the byble
For trustith we it is an impossible
That any clerke wolde speke gode of Wyues
But if it be of holy seyntes lyes
Ne of none othez women neuir the mo
Who prentyd the spoun telle me who
By god if women hadde wryten stozes
As clerkes haue within theire Dratozpes
They wolde haue wryten of men more Wychedness
Than alle the marke of Adam may redresse
The children of mercury and venus
Been in theire workyng ful contrarious
Mercury souyth wysdome and science
And venus loueth rpytte and dispence
And for theire dyuerse disposicioun
Eche fayleth in others exaltacioun

The wyf of Bathes prologue

As thus god wote Mercury is desolate
In pifcis where Venus is exaltate
And Venus sayleth there Mercury is reysed
Therfore women of no clerke is preysed
The clerke whan he is olde and may naught do
Of Venus werkes nat worth his olde scho
Than sytteth he down and wryteth in his dotage
That women can nat kepe theire mariage
But now to purpos why I tolde the
That I was beten for a boke parde
Upon a nyght Jankyn that was oure spre
Redde on his boke as he sat by the fyre
Of Eue first that for her wychednesse
Was al mankynde brought to wrechednesse
For whiche that Jesu criste him selue was slayne
That bought vs with his hert blode agayne
For here expresse of women may ye fynde
That woman was the losse of alle mankynde
Tho redde he me how Sampson lost his heris
Slepyng. his lemman kytte them with her sheres
Throughe whiche treason lost he bothe his eyen
Tho redde he me if that I shal nat lye
Of hercules and of his Dyanpre
That causith him to sette him selue a fyre
No thyng forgate he the sorowe and the wo
That socrates hadde with his wyues two
How Evantippa cast pyssse vpon his hede
This sely man sat styll as he were dede
He wyped his hede nomore durst he sayn
But or the thundre stynt there cometh rayne
Of pasipha that was the quene of Crete
For shrewdnesse him thought the tale swete
I speke nomore it is a grisly thyng

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

Of her horrible lust and her lypnyng
Of Cletemystra for her high lecherye
That falsly made her husbonde to dye
He redde it with ful gode deuocion
He tolde me eke for what conclusioun
Amphioray at Thebes lost his lyf
My husbonde hadde a leggende of his wyf
Eriphylem that for an ouch of golde
Hath pryuelly vnto the grekes tolde
Where that her husbonde hyd him in a place
For whiche he hadde at Thebes a sozr grace
Of Pyma tolde he me and of Lucy
They both made theire husbondes for to dy
That one for loue that other was for hate
Pyma her husbonde spon an cunlate
Enpoysond him for that she was his foe
Lucia lyherousloued her husbond so
For he sholde algates on her thynke
She gaue vnto him suche a loue drynke
That he was dede or it was at morowe
And thus algate husbondes hadde sorowe
Than tolde he me hou that Catumeus
Compleyned hou that fel man Arzius
That in his gardyn growed suche a tre
On whiche he sayde that his wyues thre
Hanged them self for theire hertes dyspytous
O leue Brother sayde than this Arrius
yene me a plante of that blissed tre
And in my gardyn planted shal it be
Of latter date of wyues hath he redde
That some haue slayne theire husbondes a bedde
And leet the lichoure diggt them alle the nyght
Whiles that the corps lay in the floze spryght

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

And som haue dryue nayles in their brayn
Whiles that they slept & thus they haue them slayn
Som haue peue them popson in their drynke
He spake more harme than herte may thynke
And therewithalle he coude mo prouerbes
Than in this worlde growe grasse or herbes
Bettyr is quod he thyn habitacioun
Be with a lyoun or a foule dragoun
Than with a woman bspng for to chyn
Bettyr is quod he high in his roof abyde
Than with an angry wyf down in the house
They be so wyched and so contrarious
They haten that their husbondes loue ay
He sayde a woman cast her shame a way
Whan she cast of her smoke and ferthermo
A fayre woman but she be chaste also
Is lyke a golde ryng on a sowes nose
Who wolde leue or who wolde suppose
The wo that in myn herte was and pyne
And whan I sa we that he wolde neuiz fyne
To rede on his corsed boke al nyght
Al sodenly thre leups haue I plyght
Dute of his boke right as he reode and eke
I with my fyft so toke him on the cheke
That in oure fyre he fyl bak warde a down
And by he stert as doth a wode lyoun
And with his fiste he smote me on the hede
That in the floze I ley as were dede
And whan he sa we how styl that I lay
He was agast and wolde haue fledde a way
Tyl at the last I oute of my swonne abraide
O hast thou slayn me false theef I sayde
And for my londe thus hast thou muredde me

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

Or I be dede yet wol I onys kysse the
And nere he cam and kneled fapre a doun
And sayde dere sustre swete Alisoun
As helpe me god I shal the neuir smyte
That I haue do it is thy self to wyte
Forpene it me and that I the besche
And yet est sones I hytte him on the cheke
And sayde theef thus moche I am bewreke
Now wol I dye I may no lenger speke
But at the last with moche care and wo
We spt accorded by oure selfyn two
He paue me the brydel in myn honde
To haue the gouernaunce of house and londe
And afte 2 of his tonge and of his honde also
And made him brenne his boke anone tho
And than whan I hadde goten vnto me
The maystre and eke the soueraynte
And that he sayde myn owne true wyf
Doth as you lyst al the terme of poure lyf
Kepe thy honoure and eke myn estate
And afte 2 that day we hadde neuir debate
God helpe me so I was to him as kynde
As any wyf from Denmarke vnto ynde
And also true and so was he to me
I pray to god that sptteth in magesty
So blesse his soule for his mercy dere
Now wol I say my tale if ye wol here
t He frere lough whan he hadde herd al this
Now dame quod he so haue I ioye and blis
This is a long preambe of a tale
And whan the Sompnoure herde the frere tale
Lo quod the Sompnoure for goddes armes two
A frere wol entromette him euir mo

The Wyf of Bathes prologue

Lo gode men a fye and eke a frere
Wol falle in euery mannys diffhe and matere
What spekest thou of preambulacioun
What amble oz trotte go pyssse oz sytte a doun
Thou lettest oure disporte in this matere
pe Wylt thou so sir Sompnoure quod the frere
Now by my fayth I shalle oz that I go
Telle of a sompnoure suche a tale oz two
That alre folke shal laugh in this place
Now elles frere I beshre we thy face
Quod this Sompnoure, and I beshre we me
But if I telle tales two oz thre
Of freres oz that I come to Sydynghbourn
That I shal make the soze for to morne
for wele I woot thy pacience is gone
Dure hoost cryde pease and that anone
And sarde let the woman telle her tale
pe faren as folkes that dronke been of ale
Doda me telle forth poure tale and that is best
Al redy sir quod she right as pou lyst
If I haue licence of this worthy frere
yes dame quod he telle forth and I wol here

Here endith the Wyf of Bathes prologue
And here begynneth her Tale

i n olde dapes of kyng Arthoure
Of whiche Britons speke grete honoure
al was this londe fulfylled of fayrpe
The elphe quene with her ioly company
Daunced ful ofte in many a grene mede
This was the olde opunyon as I rede
I speke of many an hundred peres a goo

The Wyf of Bathes Tale

But now we can noman se none elphes mo
For now the grette charite and prayers
Of symptoures and othez holy freres
That serchen euerylonde and euery streme
As thyche as motes in the sonne beame
Blessyng halles chambers kychens and boures
Cytes borughes castelles and higghe toures
Thorpes barnes shepens and depres
This makith that there be no ferpes
For there as wont was to walke an elphe
There walkith now the symptoure him self
In vndermeles and in moornynges
And sayth his matyrs and his holy thynges
As he goth forth in his symptacioun
Women may now go sauely by and doun
Vndre euery busshe and vndre euery tre
There is none othez incubus but he
And he ne wolde do them any dishonoure
And so besyl that this kyng Arthoure
Hadde in his house a lusty bachelez
That on a day cam rydyng fro the ryuere
And happed that allone as he was boyn
He sawe a mayde walkyng him byforn
Of whiche mayde anon he magre hez hede
By very force he beraft hez maydenshede
For whiche oppressioun was suche clamoure
And suche pursute vnto vnto kyng Arthoure
That dampned was this knyght for to be dede
By course of lawe and sholde haue lost his hede
Parauenture suche was the statute tho
But that the quene and othez ladies moo
So longe prayde the kyng of grace
Tyl he his self graunted in that place

The Wyf of Bathes Tale

and pauer him to the quene alle at hez wyll
To chese whether she wolde him saue or spylle
The quene thanked the knyng with alle hez myghte
and after this thus spake she to the knyght
whan she sawe hez tyme upon a day
Thou stondest yet quod she in suche aray
That of thy lyf yet hast thou no surete
I graunt thy lyf if thou canst telle me
what thing it is that women moost desiren
Be ware and kepe thy necke from iren
And if thou canst nat telle it anone
I shal the pryncesse yet for to gone
a twelue month and a day to seche and lere
An aunswere sufficiaunt in this matere
And surete wol I haue or that thou pace
Thy body for to yelde in this place
Woo was this knyght and sorowfully he siggheth
But he may nat do alle as him lyketh
And at the last he chose him for to wende
and come agayn right at the peres ende
with suche aunswere as god wolde him puruey
and takith his leue and wendith forth his wey
he sekith euery house and euery place
where as he hopith for to fynde grace
To wytte what thyng women loued moost
But he coude aryuen in no roost
There as he myght fynde in this matere
Two creatures accordyng in fere
Some sayd women loued best richesse
Some sayde honoure som sayde iolynesse
Som sayde riche aray som sayde lust a bedde
and ofte tymes to be wydowe and to be wedde
Som sayde that we be in hert moost eased

The Wyf of Bathes Tale

Whan we be flatred and y pleased
He goth ful nygh the soth þi wol nat lye
A man shal best wyne be with flaterye
And with attendaunce and with besynesse
Been we plymed both more and lesse
And some sayd that we wolde lone best
For to be fre and do right as vs lyst
And that noman repreue be of oure byce
But say that we be wyse and nothing nyce
For truly ther is none of vs alle
If any wight wol call we be on the galle
That we nyl lye for that he sayth be sothe
Assay quod he shal fynde it what it doth
For be we neuir so viciousse with ynne
We wolde beholde wyse and cleen oute of synne
And some sayde grette desyre haue we
For to beholde stable and eke secre
And in one purpos stedfastly to dwellle
And nat to be wraped that men be telle
But that tale is nat worth a rake stele
Parde we women can nothing bele
Wytnes on myda. Wol ye here the tale
Tuide among other thinges smale
Sayde myda hadde vndre his long heres
Growyng bpon his hede two assessers
The whiche byce he hadde as he best myght
Fulle subtelly from euery mannys sight
That saue his wyf they wist it nomo
Belouyd her most and trustyd her also
He prayed her that to no maner creature
She shode telle of his foule disfigure
She swore him that for alle the worlde to wyne
She nolde do that belonyng synne

The Wyf of Bathes Tale

To make her husbonde to haue so foule a name
She wolde it nat for her owne shame
But neuirthelesse she thought that she dyde
That she so long sholde a counseyl hyde
She thoughte it was so soze aboute her herte
That nedes some worde her must a stert
And sithen she durst telle it to no man
Down by the mar she fast by she ran
Tyl she cam there her hert was in fyre
And as a bytoure blombyth in the myre
She leyde her mouthe vnto the water down
Be wrey me nat thou water with thy soun
Quod she. to the I telle it and to nomo
My husbonde hath long asshes erys two
Nowe is myn hert al hole now is it oute
I myght no lenger kepe it oute of doute
Here may ye se though we a tyme abyde
yet oute it must we can no counseyle hyde
The remenaunt of the tale if ye wol here
Redith Dwyde and there ye may it lere
This knyght of whom my tale is specially
Whan that he sa we he myght nat come therby
This is to say what women louen moost
Within his brest so sorowfulle was his goost
But home he goth he myght nat sojourne
The day was come that homwarde must he tourne
And in his wey as happed him to ryde
In alle his care vndre a forest syde
Where as he sa we vpon a daunce go
Of ladies foure and twenty and yet mo
Towarde whiche daunce he drewe ful perne
In hope that he sholde som wysdom lern
But certaynly or that he cam fully there

The Wyf of Bathes Tale

Danysshed was this daunce he nyf where
No creature sawe he that bare lypf
Sawe on the grene he sawe spyttyng a wyf
A fouler wight ther myght no man deuyse
Agayn this knyght this olde wyf gan ryse
And sayde sir knyght here forth lypth no wey
But telle me what ye seke by poure say
Paraventure it may the better be
Thise olde folke can moche thyng quod she
My leue modre quod this knyght certayn
I nam but dede but if that I can sayn
What thyng it is that women moost desire
Coude ye me wysshe I wolde quyte wele poure hire
Plight me thy trouthe here in my honde quod she
The next thyng that I requyre the
Thou shalt it do if it lye in thy myght
And I wol telle it you or it be nyght
Haue here my trouthe quod the knyght I graunte
Than quod she I dar wele make auaunte
Thy lypf is sauf for I wol stonde therby
Upon my lypf the quene wol say as I
Let see whiche is the proudest of them alle
That werith on othez hyz chief or calle
That dar say nay of that I wol the teche
Let vs go forth withoute more speche
Tho rowned she a ppystel in his ere
And hadde him be glade and haue no fere
When they be comen to the courte this knyght
Sayde he kept his day as he hadde hyght
And redy was his aunswere as he sayde
Ful many a noble wyf and many a mayde
And many a wydolwe for that they be wyse
The quene her self sittynge as iustise

The Wyf of Bathes Tale

Assembled been this aunswere for to here
And afterwarde this knyght was bodeyn tappare
To euery wight was comaunded silence
And that the knyght sholde tel in audience
What thyng that worldy women loue best
This knyght stode nat styl as doth a beest
But to his questioun anone aunswerde
With manny boyce that at the courte it herde
Opylyte lady than general quod he
Women desire to haue soueraynte
As wele of their husbondes as of their loue
And for to be in maystrye aboue
This is youre moost desire though ye me kylle
Doth as you lyst I am here at youre wyf
In al the courte ne was ther wyf ne mayde
Ne wydowe that contraried that he sayde
But sayde he was worthy to haue his lyf
And with that worde he stert this olde wyf
Whiche that the knyght fonde spyttyng on the grene
Mercy quod she my souerayne lady queene
Dy that youre courte departe as do me right
I taught this aunswere vnto this knyght
For whiche he pryncht me his trouthe there
The first thyng I wolde him requere
He wolde it do if it lay in his myght
Bifore this courte than pray I the sir knyght
Quod she. that thou me take vnto thy wyf
For wele thou wotest that I haue sauid thy lyf
If I were fals swere nay vpon thy fep
The knyght aunswerd alas and wel a wey
I wote right wele that suche was my behest
For goddes loue chees a newe request
Take alle my gode and let my body go

The Wyf of Bathes Tale

Nay than quod she I shre we vs bothe two
For though that I be foule olde and poure
I wol nat for al the metal and the oure
That vndre the grounde lyth oz aboue
But I thy wyf were and eke thy loue
My loue quod he nay but my dampnacioun
Allas that euir any of my nacioun
So foule sholde euir disperaged be
But al for naught the ende is thus that he
Constreyned was nedes must he her wedde
And take his olde wyf and go to bedde
Now wolde some men say parauenture
For my negligence I do no cure
To telle you the ioye and alle the arzaie
That at the fest was that ilke day
To whiche thyng shortly I aunswere shalle
I say ther was no fest ne ioye at alle
There nas but heuynes and moche sorowe
For pryuely he wedded her by the morowe
And al day after hydde him as an owle
So wo was him his wyf loke so foule
Grette was the wo that the knyght had in thought
Whan he was with his wyf a bedde y brought
He walueth and he turneth to and fro
His olde wyf lay symplyng euir mo
And sayde o dere husbonde benedicite
Fariþ euery knyght thus with his wyf as ye
Is this the lawe of kyng Arthours hous
Is euery knyght of his loue so daunterous
I am poure owne loue and eke poure wyf
I am she whiche saued hath poure lyf
And certis yet I dyd you neuir vnright
Why fare ye thus with me the first nyght

The Wyf of Bathes Tale

pe fare lyke a man hadde lost his wytte
What is my gylte for goddes loue tel me it
And it shal be amended if that I may
Amendyd quod this knyght alas nay nay
It wol nat be amended neuir the moo
Thou arte so lothly and so olde also
And therto comen of folowe a kynde
That lytel wondre is though I walow and wynde
So wolde god quod he myn herte wolde brest
Is this quod she the cause of poure brest
pe certayn quod he no wondre it is
Now sir quod she I coude amende alle this
If that me lyst or it be daies thre
So wele pe myght bere you bnto me
But for pe speke of suche gentylnesse
As is descended oute of olde riches
That therfore pe shulde be gentylmen
Suche erogaunce is nat worth an henne
Loke who is moost vertuons alwey
Pryuy and apert and moost entendyth ay
To do the gentylest dedes that he can
Take him for the gentilest gentylman
Criste wol we clayme of him oure gentylnesse
Nat of oure eldres for theire olde richesse
For though they geue vs alle theire heritage
For whiche we clayme to be of hight parage
yet may they nat bequeth for no thyng
To none of vs theire vertuons spuyng
That made them gentylmen called to be
And hadde vs folowe them in suche degre
wele can the wise poete of florence
That hight daunte speke of this sentence
For in suche maner ryne is dauntes tale

The Wyf of Bathes Tale

ful selden vp ryseth by his braunches smale
Proues of man for god of his godenes
Wol that of him we clayme oure gentylnes
For of oure elders may we nothyng clayme
But temporalle thyng that may hurte and mayne
Eke every wight wote this as wele as I
If gentylnes were plaunted naturall
Vnto a certayn lynage down the lyne
Dryn and apert than wol they neuer fyne
To do of gentylnes the feyre office
They myght do no belony or byce
Take fyre and bere it in the derkest house
Bitwyte this and the mount of Caucasus
And let men shytte the dores and go thenne
yet wol the fyre as fayre ly and brenne
As twenty thousand men myght it beholde
His office naturall as wol he holde
Vpper of my lyf tyl that it dye
Here may ye se how that gentye
Is nat annexed to possession
Suche folke ne doth there operacioun
Alwey as doth the fyre lo in his hynde
For god it wote men may ful ofte fynde
A lordes sonne do shame and belony
And he that wol haue pryce of his gentye
For he was born of a gentyl house
And hadde his elders noble and vertuons
And wyl him self do no gentyl dedes
Ne folowe his gentyl auncetours that dede is
He is nat gentyl he he duke he he erle
If byleyns synful dedes make a cherle
For gentylnesse nys but the renome
Of thyng auncetoures for their high bounte

The Wyf of Bathes Tale

whiche is a straunge thyng to thy persone
Thy gentylnes cometh fro god alone
Than cometh oure very gentylnes of grace
It was no thyng biquedyn vs with oure place
Thynkyst how noble as sayth Valerius
Was that Romayn Tullius Hostilius
That oute of pouerte roose to high noblesse
Redith Seneke and redith eke Boece
There shal ye se expres that no drede is
That he is gentyl that doth gentyl dedes
And therfore leue husbonde thus I conclude
Were it that myn auncetoures were rude
yet may the high god and so hope I
Graunte me grace to lye vertuously
Than am I vertuous when I begyn
To lye vertuously and do a wey synne
And there as ye of pouerte me repreue
That high god on whome holy we beleue
In wyful pouerte chees to lede his lyf
And certis euery man mayden and wyf
May vnderstonde that Jesus heuyn kyng
Ne wolde nat chee a byciousc luyng
Blade pouerte is a ful honest thyng certayn
This wol Seneke and othez clerkes sayn
Who so that holdith him payed of his pouert
I holde him ryche and he hadde nat a shert
He that couetith he is a ful poure wight
For he wolde haue that is nat in his myght
But he that naught hath ne couetith to haue
Is riche al though ye holde him but a knaue
Very pouert is synne properly
Iuuenal spekith therof fulle merely
The poure man whan he goth by the wey

The Wyf of Bathes Tale

Bi fore the theuys he may synge and pley
Pouert is hateful gode and as I gesse
A fulle grete bryngez oute of besynesse
A grete amender eke of sapience
To him that takith it in pacience
Pouerte is this al though it se me elente
Possessioun that noman wolde gladly chalente
Pouerte ful ofte whan a man is low
Makith his god and eke him self to knowe
Pouerte a spectakyl is as thynkith me
Throughe whiche he may his berz frendes se
And therfore sir sithen therin ye be greued
Of my pouerte let me nomore be reprenyd
Now sir there as of elde ye repzeue me
And certis sir though none auctozyte
Were in the boke ye gentylles of honoure
Say that men sholde an olde wight fauoure
And clepe it fader for theire gentylnesse
And auctoures shal I fynde as I gesse
Now there as ye say I am foule and olde
Than drede ye nat to be made cochofde
For sylthe elde and foule so mot I the
Been grete wardeyns bpon chastite
But natheles sithen I know youre delyte
I shal fulfille youre worldy appetyte
Thees now quod she one of these thynges twey
To haue me olde and foule tyl that I dey
And be to you a true humble wyf
And neuiz you displea se in alle my tyf
Or elles ye shal haue me yong and feyre
And take youre auenture of the reyeire
That to youre house shal be bicause of me
Or in some othez place may wele be

The Wyf of Bathes Tale

Now chees whether that ye lyketh
This knyght auyseth him and syketh
But at the last he sayd in this manere
My lady my loue my wyf so dere
I put me fully in youre gouernaunce
These it youre self whiche may be more plesaunce
And moost honoure to you and me also
I do no force the whether of the two
But as you lyketh it suffiseth to me
Than haue I gotte of you the mastery quod she
Sithen I may these and gouerne you as me lyst
Ye certis wyf quod he I holde it for the best
Nysme quod she we be no lenger brothe
For by my trouthe I wol be to you bothe
That is to say bothe fayre and eke gode
I pray to god that I must sterue wode
But I to you be also gode and true
As euir was wyf sithen the worlde was newe
And but I be to morowe as fayre to sene
As any lady empresse or quene
That is betwixte the este and the west
Doth with my lyf and deeth as ye lyst
And so they slepte tyl it was morowe gray
And then she sayde whan it was day
Cast by the curteyn loke how it is
And whan the knyght sawe berely al this
That she so fayre was and so yong therto
For ioye he hynt her in his armes two
His herte was bathed in a bathe of blis
A thousand tyme arowe he gan her kys
She obeyed him in euery thyng
That myght do him plesaunce or lykynge
And thus they lyue vnto their lyues ende

The freeres prologue

And parfyte ioye and Jesu criste be sende
Busbondes meke yong and fressh a bedde
And grace to ouir lyue them that we wedde
And eke I pray Jesus shortheire lyues
That wol nat be gouerned by theire wyues
And olde and angry nyghardes in dispence
God sende them sone a berzy pestilence

Here endith the tale of the wyf of Bathe
And here begynneth the freeres prologue

His noble lymytoure this worthy freze
He made alwey a maner louryng there
Upon the sompnoure but for honestye
No byleyns worde as yet to him spake he
But at the last he sayde vnto the wyf
Now dame quod he god yue you right gode lyf
Ye haue here touched also moot I thee
In scole matere a ful grette disticulyte
Ye haue sayde moche gode thyng right wele I sey
But dame as here as ye ryden by the way
Vs nedith nat to speke but of game
And lete auctoritees on goddes name
To prechyng and to scole of clergye
And if it lyke vnto this company
I wol you of a Sompnoure tel a game
Parde ye may wele knowe by the name
That of a sompnoure may no gode be sayde
I pray that none of you be euyl appayed
A sompnoure is a ryner by and down
With maundmentes for fornycatioun
And is y bete at enery towne ende
Dure hoost than spake a fire ye sholde be hende

The freres Tale

and curteys as a man of youre astate
In company we wol haue no debate
Telleth youre tale and let the sompnoure be
Nay quod the sompnoure let him say by me
What so him lyst whan it cometh to my lot
By god I shal him quyte euery grot
I shal him telle which a grette honoure
It is to be a flaterynge lymptoure
And of many othez maner cryme
Whiche nedith nat to reherce at this tyme
And his office I shalle him telle y wys
Dure hoost aunswerde peas nomore of this
And after this he sayde vnto the frere
Telle forth youre tale myn owne mayster dere

Here endith the freres prologue
And begynneth his tale



The freres Tale

Whylom ther was duellyng in my countre
An archedehyn a man of high degre
That boldly dyd wele execution
In punysshynge of fornicacion
Of wycheecraft and eke of bandrye
Of diffamacioun and auoutre
Of chirche reus and of testamentes
Of contracte and of lacke of sacramentes
Of vsury and eke of symonye also
But certis lichoures dyd he grettest woo
They sholde synge if that they were hene
And smale tythes also were soule shene
If any persone vpon them pleye
There myght astate no pecuniyal peyne
For smale tythes and smale offryng
He made the people ful pytously to synge
For oz the bisshop caught them with his boke
They were in the Archedehyns boke
And than hadde he throughe his iurisdiction
Powere of them to do ful correction
He hadde a sompnoure redy to his honde
A slyghter boy was none in Englonde
For sotelly he hadde his espyale
That taught him where he myght auayle
He coude spare of lechoures one oz two
To teche him to foure and twenty moo
For though the sompnoure wode were as an hare
To telle his harlotrye I wol nat spare
For we be oute of his correccioun
They haue of vs no iurisdiction
Ne neuer shalle terme of alle theire synes
Petir so be women of the stypps
Quod the sompnoure. put oute of oure cure

The Freres Tale

Peas with myschaunce and with mysauenture
Sayde oure hoost and let him telle his tale
Now telle forth though the Sompnoure gate
He spareth nat myn owne mayster dere
This fals theef this sompnoure quod the frere
Had alwey halwes redy to his honde
As any halwe is to the lure in Engelsonde
That tolde him alle the secre that they kne we
For theire acqeyntaunce was nat come of ne we
They were al his approuers pryuelly
He toke him self a grete profet therby
His mayster kne we nat alwey what he way
Withouten maundementes a leude man
He coude sompne on peyne of cristes curse
And they were glade for to fylle his purse
And make him grete festes at the nale
And right as Judas had purses smale
And was a theef right suche a theef was he
His mayster hath but half his duete
He was if I shal yeue him his laude
A theef a Sompnoure and eke a baude
He hadde eke wenches at his retinue
That whethe 2 sir Robert or sir Hue
Or Iacke or Kauf or who so that it were
That ley by them they tolde him in his ere
Thus were the wenchys and he of one assent
And he wolde set a feyned maundment
And sompne them to the chaptre bothe two
And pele the man and let the wenche go
Than wolde he say frende I shal for thy sake
Do stryke the oute of oure lettres blake
The the 2 nomore as in this caas trauayle
I am thy frende there I may the auayle

The freres Tale

Certayn he knewe of brybours many mo
Than possible is to telle in yeres two
For in this worlde nys dogge for the bolwe
That can an hurte dere from an hole knowe
Bettre than this Sompnoure knewe a slepyg lychour
Draoutrez oz elies any paramoure
And for that was the frute of alle his rent
Therfore on it he sette alle his entent
And so befyl that onys upon a day
This sompnoure was euir waytyng his pray
For to sompne an olde wyf a rebbye
Freyng a cause for he wolde haue a brybe
It happed that he sawe biforn him ryde
A gay yeman vndre a forest syde
A bolwe he bare and a rowes bright and hene
He hadde upon him a courtpe of grene
An hat upon his hede with strenges blake
Sir quod the sompnoure haple and wele y take
Welcome quod he and euery gode felaw
Whydre rydest thou vndre this grene wode shaw
Saide this yoman wylt thou ferze to day
This sompnoure aunswerde and sayde nay
Here fast by quod he is myn entent
To ryden for to ryse by al the rent
That longith now to my lordes duete
Art thou than a baille. y quod he
He ne durst for belony and shame
Say that he was a sompnoure for the name
Depardeux quod this yeman dere brothez
Thou art a baille and I am a nothez
I am vnknowen now in this countre
Of thy acquyntaunce than I pray the
And eke of brederhode if that thou lyst

The Freres Tale

I haue golde and syluer in my chyst
If that the happith to come in oure shyre
al shalbe thyn right as thou wylt desire
Gramercy quod this Sompnoure by my feyth
Eueriche in others honde his trouthe he leyth
for to be sworne brethern tyl they dey
In daliaunce they ryde forth and pley
This Sompnoure whiche was ful of Jangelis
as ful of benym been the se berz anglis
And eir enquirynge vpon euery thing
Brother quod he where is nowe youre duellyng
A nother day if that I shal you seche
This roman him aunswerde with soft speche
Brother quod he sez in the north countre
Where as I hope somtyme I shal the se
Or we departe I shal the so wele wys
That of my house ne shalt thou neuir mys
Now brother quod this Sompnoure I you pray
Teeche me whiles we ryde by the way
Sithen that ye be a bailly and so am I
Some subtelte and tellyth me feithfully
In myn office hou I may moost wyne
And sparith nat for conscience ne synne
But dere brother telle me how do ye
Now by my trouthe dere brother sayde he
as I shal tel the a feythful tale
My wages be ful streyt and ful smale
My lord is harde to me and daungerous
And myn office is ful labourous
And therfore by extorsions I gyue
for soth I take alle that men wol me geue
algate by sight or by byodence
from pere to pere I wyne alle my dyspence

The Freres Tale

I can no better tel the feythfully
Now certis quod the Sompnoure so fare I
I spare nat to take god it wote
But if it be to heuy or to hote
That I may gete in counsel pryvely
Nomoze conscience of that haue I
Nere my extorcioun I myght nat lye
Ne of suche iapes wol I nat be shreuy
Stomake ne conscience knowe I none
I shrewe the schryftefaders euerichone
Wele be we mette by god and by seynt Jame
But leue brothez tel me thy name
Quod this Sompnoure in this meane whyle
This yeman gan a lytel for to smyle
Brothez quod he wylt thou that I the telle
I am a feende my dwelling is in helle
And here I ryde aboute my purchasyng
To wytte if men wol geue me any thyng
To purchase is the effecte of alle my rent
Loke hou thou rydest for alle the same entent
To wyne gode thou rechest neuir how
Right so fare I for ryde wol I now
Vnto the worldes ende for a pray
A quod the Sompnoure benedicite what ye say
I wende ye hadde been a yoman truly
Ye haue a mannys shappe as wele as I
Haue ye than a fygnre determynat
In helle there ye be in youre astate
May certaynly quod he there haue we none
But whan we lyeth we can take us one
Or elles make you wene we be shape
Somytyme lyke a man and somtyme lyke an ape
Or lyke an aungel can I ryde or goo

The frezes Tale

It is no wondre thyng though it be so
a housye iogloure can desceyue the
And parde yet more craft can I than he
Wij quod the sompnoure ryde ye than oz gone
In sondry shappe and nat alwey in one
for we quod he wol be in suche fourme make
As moost auayle is oure prayes for to take
What makith you to haue alle this labour
Wil many a cause leue sir Sompnoure
Sayde this feende but al thyng hath tyme
The day is short and it is passed pryme
And yet ne gat I nothyng in this day
I wol intende to wynnynge if I may
And nat intende oure wyttes to declare
for brothez myne thy wyttes been alle to bare
To vnderstonde al though I tolde them the
But for thou askith why labour we
for somtyme we be goddes instrumentes
And meanes to do his comaundmentes
Whan that him lyst vpon his creatures
In dyuerse acte and in dyuerse figures
Withoute him we haue no myght certayne
If that him lyst to stonde there ageyn
And somtyme at oure prayes haue we leue
Only the body and nat the soule to greue
Wytnes of Job whom we dyd wo
And somtyme haue we myght on both two
This is to say on soule and on body eke
And somtyme we be suffred for to seke
Vpon a man and do his soule vnrest
And nat his body and alle is for the best
Whan he withstandith oure temptacioun
It is a cause of his saluacioun

The Frezes Tale

Al be it that it was nat oure entent
He sholde be sauf by goddes iugement
And somtyme we be seruaunt vnto man
As to the Archebisschop seint Dnustan
And to the appostel seraunt eke was I
Yet telle me quod the sompnoure feithfully
Make ye youre bodies in suche wyse alwey
Of clementes. the fernde aunswerde nay
Somtyme we seynen and somtyme we aryse
With dede bodies in felle sondry wyse
And speke as resonable fayre and wele
As the phytonysse dyd to samuel
And yet wol som men say it was nat he
I do no force of youre dignyte
But one thyng warne I the I wol nat sape
Thou wylt we te al gates how we be shape
Thou shalt here afterwarde my brother dere
Come where it nedith nat of me to lere
For thou shalt by thyr owne experience
Conne in the chaire ride of this sentence
Bettyr than virgyle whilk he was on lyue
Dydaunte also now let vs ryde belyue
For I wol holde company with the
Tyl it be so that thou forsake me
Nay quod the sompnoure that shal nat betyde
I am a peman that knowen am ful wyde
My trouthe wol I holde to the as in this caas
For though were the demyl sathanas
My trouthe wol I holde to the my brother
As I am sworn and eche of vs tyl othe
For to be true brother in this caas
And bothe we gone aboute oure purchaas
Take thou thy parte of that men wol the yue

The Frezes Tale

And I shalle myne thus may we bothe lyue
And if that any of vs haue more than othez
Let him be true and parte it with his brothez
I graunte quod the deuyll by my say
And with that worde they ryden forth the wey
And right at an entre of a townes ende
To whiche that Sompnoure shope him to wende
They sa we a carte that charged was with hey
Whiche that a carter droue forth in the wey
Deep was the wey for whiche the carte stode
This carter smote and cryde as he were wode
What heyt brok heyt scot spare ye for the stones
The feende quod he you secche body and bones
As ferforth as euer ye were y foled
So moche wo as I haue for you tholed
The deuyll haue al bothe horse carte and hey
Quod the Sompnoure here shal we haue a pley
And nere the feende he drewe as naught ne were
ful pryuelly and rowned in his ere
Herken my brothez herken by thy seyth
Heryst nat how the carter seyth
Take it anone for he hath yue it the
Bothe hey and carte and eke his capulles thre
Nay quod the deuyll god wote neuer a dele
It is nat his entent truste me wele
Aske him self if that you trowest nat me
Dreles stynt a while and thou shalt se
This carter chaked his horse on the croupe
And they began to draue and to stoupe
Hayte now quod he that Jesu crist you bles
And alle his hondy worke bothe more and les
That was wele y twyght myn owne lye rde Gop
I pray god saue the and seynt loye

The frezes Tale

Now is my carte oute of the slouth parde
So brotther quod the fende what tolde I the
Here may ye se myn owne dere brotther
The chorle spake one thyng and thought a nother
Let vs go forth aboute oure bygge
Here Wynne I nothyng bypon this carlatte
Whan that they cam somwhat oute of the toun
This sompnoure to his brotther gan to roun
Brotther quod he here wonyth an olde rebecke
That hadde almoost as leef to lese hez necke
As for to geue a peny of hez gode
I wol haue t welue pens though that she be wode
Or I wol somone hez into oure office
And yet god wote of hez I knowe no byce
But for thou canst nat as in this countre
Wynne thy costes take here ensample of me
This sompnoure clapyd at the wydowes gate
Come oute he sayde thou olde berry trate
I trowe thou hast som preest or freze with the
Who knochith sayde this wyf benedicite
God saue you sir what is youre swete wyf
I haue quod the sompnoure of the a byl
Upon peyne of cursyng loke that thou be
To morow bifoze the archedehyns knee
To aunswere to the courte of certayn thyng
Now lorde quod she Jesu criste heuyn kyng
So wysely helpe me as I ne may
I haue be sche and that ful many a day
I may nat go so fer quod she ne ryde
But I be dede so pryeth in my spde
May I nat aske a lybel sir Sompnoure
And aunswere there by my proctoure
To suche thyng as men wol appose me

The Frezes Tale

pes quod the Sompnoure pay anon let se
Twelf pens to me and I wol the quyte
I shal no profet haue therby but lyte
My master hath the profet and nat I
Come of and lete me ryde hastely
pene me twelf pens for I may no lengere tary
Twelf pens quod she a lady seint Mary
So wysely me helpe oute of care and synne
This wyde worlde though I sholde it wynnne
Ne haue I nat twelue pens within my holde
ye knowe wele that I am poure and olde
Ry the poure almes on me poure wretche
Nay than quod he the soule feende me fetch
If I the excuse though thou sholde be spylt
allas quod she god wote I am nat in the gylt
Pay me quod he or by swete seint anne
I wol anone bere a wey thy newe pan
for dette whiche thou owest me of olde
Whan that thou madest thy husbonde coke olde
I payde at home for thy correction
Thou lyste quod she by my saluacion
Ne was I neuiz or now wydo we ne wyf
Sompned into poure courte in alle my lyf
Ne neuiz I was but of my body true
Vnto the deuyl blake and rough of he we
pene I thy body and eke myn panne also
And whan the deuyl herde hez curse so
Upon hez knees he sayde in this manere
Now mayst myn owne modre dere
Is this poure wyf in ernyst as ye sey
The deuyl quod she sette him or he dey
And panne and al bu the wol him repent
Nay olde stof that is nat myn entent

The frezes Tale

Quod the sompnoure for to repent me
For any thyng that I haue hadde of the
I wolde I hadde thy smoke and euery cloth
Now brother quod the deupl be nat wrothe
Thy body and this panne is myn by right
Thou shalt to helle with me yet to nyght
Where thou shalt knowe of oure prpyte
More than a mayster of diuinyte
And with that worde the foule seende him hent
Body and soule he with the deupl went
Where that these sompnoures haue theire heritage
And god that made after his ymage
Mankynd. saue and gyde vs alle and some
And leue that sompnoures gode men become
Lordpnytes I coude telle you quod the frere
Hadde I had leue for the sompnoure here
After the texte of crist poule and John
And of oure othez doctoures many one
Suche peynes as poure hertes myght agryse
Al be it so that no tynge may I deuyse
Though that I myght a thousand wynter tel
The peynes of that cursyd house of helle
But for to hepe vs fro that cursed place
Wakith and prayeth Jesu of his grace
So kepe vs fro the temptoure Sathanas
Berheth this worde be ware as in this caas
The loun sytteth in his wayte alwey
To sle the innocent if that he may
Dispose ye poure hertes ay to withstonde
The seende that wol make you thral and bonde
He may nat tempte you ouir your myght
For crist wol be poure champpon and knyght
And pray the sompnoure him repent

The Sompnoures prologue

Of his mysdoeds or that the deuyl him hent

Here endith the freres tale
And begynneth the Sompnoures prologe

His sompnoure in his sterop high stode
Upon this freze his hert was so wode
That lyke an aspen leef he quoke for ire
Lordynges quod he one thyng I desire
If you beseeche of poure curtesye
Sithen ye haue herde this false freze lye
As suffreth me I may my tale tel
This frere gostly that he knowith wel
And god wote that is lytel wondre
Frezes and feendes been ful lytel a sondre
For parde ye haue herde ofte tyme tel
How that a freze raupsshed was to helpe
In spiryte onys by a bysoun
And as an aungel led him vp and down
To shewe him the tozmentes that were there
In al the place he sawe he nat a freze
Of othez folke he sawe ynough in wo
Unto the aungel spake this freze tho
Now sir quod he haue frezes suche a grace
That none of them shal come in this place
Yes quod the aungel many a myllion
And vnto sathanas he ledde him down
And now hath sathanas suche a tayle
Broder than a Carpye is the sayle
Holde by thy tayle thou sathanas quod he
Shewe forth thy ers and let the freze se
Where is the nest of frezes in this place
And or that a furongt were of space

The sompnoures prologue

And right so as bees swarme oute of an hyue
Dute of the deuylls ers they gan dryue
Twenty thousand frezes on a route
And through oute helle swarmpd alle a bouite
And cam agayn as faste as they may gone
And into his ers they crepte euerichone
He clippd ageyn his taylor and lay syl
This freze whan he lohed had his syl
Dopn the tormentes of this soz place
His spryte god restored of his grace
Vnto his body agayn and he awoke
But natheles for feir yet he quoke
So was the deuylls ers ay in his mynde
Than is it his heritag of verzy kynde
God saue you al saue this cursed freze
My prologue wol yende in this manere

Here endith the sompnoures prologue



The Sompnoures Tale

Here begynneth the Sompnoures tale

! Dydnges ther is in porke shyre as I gesse
A merthe cowntre that called is holdernesse
In whiche ther went a lymptoure aboute
To preche. and he to begge it is no doute
And so besyl that on a day this freze
Hadde prechyd in a chirche in his manere
And specially aboue every thyng
Excited he the people in his prechynge
To trentalles and to peue for goddes sake
Wherwith men myght holy houses make
There as dyuine seruice is honoured
Nat there it is wasyd and deuoured
Ne there it nedith nat to be peuen
As to possessioners that may gyuen
Thankyd be god in yele and habundaunce
Trentales sayd he dyspueyn from penaunce
Theire frendes soules as welde olde as yong
Ye whan they be haterly y song
Nat for to holde a reest ioly and gay
He syngith nat but one masse on a day
Dyspuereth oute any quod he the soules
ful harde it is with he shoke and oules
To be y calwed or to bryue or bake
Now spede you hastily for wistes sake
And whan this freze had sayde al his entent
With qui cum patre forth his wey he went
Whan folke in the chirche had peue what them lest
He went his way no lengere wolde he rest
With scrippe and typped staf y tuched hys
In every house he gan to poure and pryde
And begged mele and chese or elles corn

The Sompnours Tale

His fela we had a staf y tpppyd with horn
A pepre of tables of clene purp
And a poyntel y polissed fetousy
And wrote the names alwey as he stode
Of al the folke that yaued them any gode
A shaunce that he wolde for them pray
yue vs a busschel whete malt or rey
A goddes hyrtel or a cryppe of chese
Or elles what you lyst I may nat chese
A goddes half peny or a masse peny
Or yue vs of youre braune if ye haue any
A daggon of youre blanket leue dame
Dure sustre dere so here I wryte youre name
Bacon or beef or suche thyng as ye fynde
A sturdy harlot went them ay behynde
That was theire hors and enit he bare a sache
And what men yaued him leyde it on his sache
And whan he was oute at the doore anon
He playned a wey the names euerichone
That he bifore hadde wrytte in his tables
He seruyd them with nyfles and with fyles
Nay there thoulyest sompnoure quod he freze
Pease quod oure hoost for cristes motre dere
Tel forth thy tale and spare it nat a lile
So thryue I quod the sompnoure so I shal
So long he went from house to house that he
Cam to an house there he was wont to be
Refresshyd more than in an hundreth places
Seke lay the gode man whos the place is
Bedred upon a couche lowe he lay
Deus hic quod he o thomas gode day
Sayde this freze curte sly and softe
Thomas quod he god yelde you ful ofte

The Sompnoures Tale

I haue on this benche y fare ful wele
Here haue I etyn many a mery mele
And fro the benche he droue a wey the cat
And leyde a doun his potent and his hat
And eke his scrip and set him soft a doun
His felawe was go walken in to the toun
Forth with his knaue in to that hostery
Where as he shope him that nyght to lye
O dere mayster sayde this seke man
How haue ye faren sithen Marche began
I saue nat you this fourt nyght ne more
God wote quod he laboured haue I ful sore
And specially for thy saluacioun
Haue I sayde many a precious orisoun
And for oure othez frendes god them blesse
I haue this day been at youre chirche at messe
And sayde a sermon to my lewde wytte
Nat after the pleyne tyste of holy wrytte
For it is herde to you as I suppose
And therfore tel I you alle the glose
Glosyng is a ful glorious thyng certayn
For lettre sleeth as we clerkes sayn
There haue I taught them to be cheritable
And spende their gode there it is resonable
And there I saue oure dame where is she
Pondre in the pezde I trow that she be
Sayde this man and she wol come anon
A mayster welcome be ye by seint John
Sayde this wyf. how fare ye hertely
This freze aryseth by ful curtesly
And her enbrasith in his armes narowe
And kyssith her swete and chirklyth as a sparowe
With his lippes. dame quod he right wele

The Sompnours Tale

As he that is youre seruant every dele
Thanked be god that gaue you soule and lyf
yet saue I nat to day so fayre a wyf
In alle the chirche so god saue me
ye god amende the fautes sir quod she
Al gates welcome ye be by my sey
Gra mercy dame that haue I founde al wey
But of youre grette goodnes by youre leue
I wolde pray you that ye you nat greue
I wyf with Thomas speke a lytel throuwe
These curatoures been ful negligent and slow
To tropen tenderly a mannys conscience
In shryfte and in prechyng is my dyligence
And studeye on petrys wordes and poules
I walke and fyssh the cristen mennys soules
To yelde Jesus criste his propre rent
To sprede his wordes is alle myn entent
Now by youre leue dere sir quod she
Chydeth him wele for seint charite
He is as angry as is a pyssmyze
Though that he haue al that he can desyre
Though I him wrye and make him warm
And ouir him ley my leg and myn arme
He troneth lyke oure boze lyth in oure sty
O thez disporte of him right none haue I
I may nat please him in no maner caas
O Thomas ie vous dy thomas thomas
This makith the feende this must be amended
He is a thyng that hit god offended
And therfore wol I speke a worde or two
Now mayster quod the wyf or that I go
What wyf ye dame I wyf go ther aboute
Now dame quod he ie vous dy sauns doute

The Sompnoures Tale

Haue I naught of a capon but the spuez
And of youre white brede but a spuez
And after that a rosted pygges hede
But I ne wolde for me that no best were dede
Than hadde I with you hooly suffisaunce
I am a man of lytel sustenaunce
My spyrite hath his offryng in the byble
My body is as so redy and so pynchele
To wake that my body is ful destroyed
I pray you dame that ye be nat annoyed
Though I you my counseyl frendly she we
By god I nolde haue tolde it but a fewe
And sir quod she one worde or I go
My chyldre is dede within these wokes two
Sone after that ye went oute of this town
His deth sa we I by reuelacioun
Sayde this freze at home in oure doore
I dar wele say that within half an oure
After his deth I sa we him boze to blys
In my dyspoun so god my soule wys
So dyd oure Seyten and oure fermere
That haue be true frezes this spystre pere
They may now god be thanked of his lone
Maken theire Jubile and walkyn al allone
And by I rose dnd alle oure couent eke
With many a tere tryllynge on oure cheke
Withouten noyse and claterynge of belles
Te deum was oure song and nothyng elles
Sone after to criste I had an holy oryson
Thankynge him of my gode reuelacioun
For sir and dame trustith me right wele
Oure orysones been more effectuel
And more we se of cristes secreat thynges

The Sompnoures Tale

Than boze people al be they kynges
We lyue in pouerte and in abstynence
And boze folke in riches and dispenche
Of mete and drynke and in soule despyte
We haue the wordes lust al in despyte
Lazar and diues lyueden ful dyuersly
And dyuerse guerdone hadde they therby
Who so wol pray must faste and be clene
And fatte his soule and make his body lene
We fare as sayth thapostel cloth and fode
Suffiseth vs though they be nat ful gode
The clenness and the fastyng of vs frezes
Makith that criste exceptith oure prayers
Lo moyses fourty daies and fourty nyght
Fastyd or that god ful of his myght
Spake with him in the mount synay
With empty wombe fastyng many a day
There rescued he the lawe that was wryten
With goddes synger. and helpe wele ye wetyn
In the mount Dreb or he hadde any speche
With high god that is oure lyues leche
He fastyd long and was in contemplanche
Aron he hadde the temple in gouernaunce
And eke the othe preestes euerichone
Into the temple whan they sholde gone
To praye for the people and to do seruise
They nolde drynke in no maner wyse
No drynke that myght them dronke make
But there in abstynence to pray and wake
Lest that they deyde take hede what I say
But they be sobre that for the people pray
Where that I say for it ynough suffiseth
Dure lord Jesu as holy wrytte deuyseth

The Sompnours Tale

paue be en sample of fastyng and prayers
Therfore we mendicauntes we sely frezes
Been weddyd to pouerte and to contynence
To charyte humblenesse and absty nence
To pey secncion for euery right wysnesse
To wepyng mysericorde and to clenness
And therfore may ye se that oure prayers
I speke of be mendicaunt we frezes
Be to the high god more exreptable
Than poures with youre feestes at youre table
fro paradise first if I shal nat lye
Was man oute chasyd for his glotony
And chaste was man in paradise certayne
But herken now Thomas what I shal se sayn
I haue no text of it as I suppose
But I fynde a maner thyng of a glose
That specially oure swete lord Jesus
Spake this by frezes whan he sayde thus
Blyssed be they that poure in spyryte been
And so forth alle the gospel may ye seen
Whether it be lyke to oure professioun
Or theyres that swymme in possessioun
fy on their pompe and their glotony
And of their lewdnes I them deffye
We thynke they be lyke Jomman
fat as a whale and walke lyke a swan
al bynolente as a bottel in the spence
Their praye is of ful lytel reuerence
Whan they for soules say the psalme of dauid
So but they sey cor meum eructauit
who folowith cristes gospel and his fore
But we that humble be chaste and poure
Workers of goddes wordes and nat auditoures

The Sompnours Tale

Therfore right as an hauke bpon his cours
By spryngith in the aper right so prapers
Of cheritable and chaste besy frezes
Makyn them sours to goddes eris t wo
Thomas thomas so moot I ryde oz go
And by that lorde that clepyd was seynt Iue
Ne thou our brothez were sholdest thou nat thryue
For in oure chapitre praye we day and nyght
To criste to sende the bothe helth and myght
Thy body for to welden ful hastely
God wote quod he therof no thyng fele I
As helpe me god as in se we peres
Haue I spended on many dyuerse frezes
Ful many a ponde yet fare I neuiz the bet
Certayn my gode haue I almoost besette
Fare wele my golde for it is alle ago
The freze aunswerde o thomas dost thou so
What nedith the dyuers frezes for to seche
What nedith him that hath a parspite leche
To sechen othez leches in the tonn
poure inconstaunce is poure confusioun
Holde ye than me and eke al oure couent
To pray for you be nat sufficient
Thomas that iape is nat worth a myte
poure malady is for we haue tolyte
A peue that couent foure and ttwenty grotes
And peue that couent half a quarter otes
And peue that freze a peny and lete him go
Nay nay Thomas it may nothyng be so
What is a fertyng worth parted on twelue
For eche thyng that is onyd in them selue
Is more stronge than whan it is shatred
Thomas of me thou shalt nat be flatred

The Sompnoures Tale

Thou woldest haue oure labour al for nought
The high god that al this worlde hath wrought
Sayth that the workman is worthy his hire
Thomas of youre tresoure naught wol I desire
As for my self but that al oure couent
To prey for you be ay so diligent
And for to holde by cristes own churche
Thomas if ye wol lerne for to wyche
Of byldyng vpon churches may ye fynde
If it be gode in Thomas lyp of ynde
pelye here ful of angre and of ire
With which the deuyl set youre herte on fyre
And chyden here this holy innocent
your wif that is here so meke and patient
And therfore thomas trowe me if thou lyst
Ne stryue nat with thy wyf as for the best
And here this worde a wey now by thy sayth
Touchyng suche thyng lo what the wyse sayth
Within thy house ne be thou no loun
To thy subgettes do thou noon oppressioun
Ne make thy acquaintance nat to fie
And thomas yet est sones warne I the
Beware of her that in thy bosom slepith
Ware fro the serpent that so slepy crepith
Vndre the grasle and styngith ful subtelly
Beware my sonne and herthyng paciently
That twenty thousand men haue lost their lyues
For stryung with thei lemmannys & their wyues
Now sithen ye haue so holy a meke wyf
What nedith you thomas to make stryf
Ther nys I wys no serpent so cruelle
Whan a man treddith vpon his tayle ne half so fel
As a woman is whan she hath caught an pre

The Sompnoures tale

Very vengeance is than al her desire
Ire is a synne one of the grete of seyn
And ful abhomynable to the kyng of heyn
And to him selue it is a destruction
This euery lewde bycar or parson
Can say how ire engendreth homycide
Ire in soth the executoire is of pryde
Icoude of ire say right moche sorowe
That my tale sholde last tyl the morowe
And therfore pray I god bothe day and nyght
That to an irous man god sende lytel right
It is grete harm and certis grete pyte
To set an irous man in high degree

W Hilom thez Was an irous potestate
As sayth seneke. that durynghisastate
Upon a day oute ryden knyghtes two
And as fortune woide that it was so
That one of them cam home that othez nought
Anone the knyght afore the iuge is brought
That sayde thus thou hast thy felowe slayne
For whiche I deme the to deth certayne
And to a nothez knyght comaunded he
Holede him to the deth I charge the
And happyd as they went by the wey
Towarde the place where he sholde dey
The knyght cam whiche men wende had be dede
Than thought they it were the best rede
To lede them bothe to the iuge agayn
They sayde lorde the knyght is nat slayn
His fela we here he stont hole a lyue
ye shal be dede quod he so moot I thryue
This is to sey bothe on two and thre
And to the first knyght right thus spake he

The Sompnours Tale

I dampned the thou must algaates be dede
And thou also must nedes lese thy hede
For thou art cause why thy felawe dyeth
And to the thridde knyght right thus he seyth
Thou hast nat do that I comaunded the
And thus he dyd do them se al thre

i Rus Cambyses was eke dronkele w

And ay delyted him to be a shrewe
And so be fpl a lorde of his menpe
That loupd wele vertuous moralyte
Sapd on a day hit wixt hem self right thus
A lorde is lost if he be oughit vicious
There is many an eye and many an ere
Alwaytpng on a lorde he wote nat where
And dronknesse is eke a foule recorde
Of any man and namely of a lorde
For goddes loue drynkith more temperatly
Wyne makith a man to lesen wrethedly
His mynde and eke his lymmes eue richone
The reuerse shalt thou se quod he anone
And preue it by thy owne experience
That wyne ne doth to folke suche offence
Ther is no wyne bereuyth me my myght
Of honde of fote ne of myn eyen sight
And for despyte he dranke moche the more
An hundreth part than he dyd bifoze
And right anone this prous cursed wreche
This knyghtes sonne leet bifoze him fetch
Comaunded him he sholde bifoze him stonde
And sodenly he toke his bowe in honde
And by the stryng he pulled to his ere
And with an arowe he slough the childe there
Now whither haue I a spker honde or none

The Sompnoures tale

Quod he is al my myght and my mynde agone
Hath wyne bereuyd me myn eyen sight
What sholde I telle the aunswere of the knyght
His sone was sleyn ther is no more to say
Be ware therfore with lordes for to pley
Syngeth placebo and I shalle if I can
But if it be vnto a poure man

To a poure man men sholde his byces telle
But nat to a lorde though he sholde go to hel
¶ O Irus Cyprus that ilke percie

How distroyed he the ryuer of gyfen
For that an horse of his was dreynt therin
Whan that he went Babylon for to wyne
He made that the ryuer was so smal
That men myght ryde or wade ouir al
Lo what sayd he that so wele teche can
Ne be no fela we to no an irous man
Ne with no wode man walke by the wey
Lest thou repente I wol no ferther sey
Now thomas leef brothez leue thyn ire
Thou shalt me fynde as iuste as a squire
Holde nat the deuples knyght in thyn herte
Thyn angre doth the al to sore smert
But she we to me alle thy confession
May quod the seke man by seint Symon
I haue be shryue this day of my curate
I haue him tolde al hooly myn estate
It nedith no more to speke of it sayde he
But if it lyst of myn humylite

peue me than of thy gode to make oure cloyster
Sayd he for many a mushke and many an opster
Whan othez men haue been ful wele at ease
Haue been oure food oure cloyster for to repse

The Sompnours Tale

and yet god wote benneth oure fundament
parfourmed is ne of oure chirche ful pauement
Ther is nat a tyle within oure wonys
By god we owe spstyp pounde for stones
Now helpe thomas for him that harowed helle
Dreles must we oure bokes selle
And if men lacke oure predicacioun
Than goth the worlde al to distructioun
for who so wol fro this worlde be bereue
So god me saue thomas by poure leue
He wolde bereue oute of this worlde the sonne
for who can teche and worke as we honne
And that is nat of lytel tyme quod he
But sithen help was or helpe
haue frezes he that fynde I of recorde
In charite y thanked be oure lorde
Now thomas helpe for seynt charite
And down anone he sitteth on his knee
This seke man weyt nygh wode for ire
He wolde that the freze had be a fyre
With his false dissymplacioun
Suche thynges as been in my professioun
Quod he that may I geue and none othez
ye say me thus hou that I am poure brothez
re certis quod the frere trustith me right wele
I toke oure dame oure lettre and our sele
Now wele quod he and somwhat shal I geue
Vnto poure holy couent while I leue
And in thy honde thou shalt it haue anone
On this condicion and othez none
That thou departe it so my dere brothez
That every freze haue as moche as othez
This shalt thou swere on thy professioun

The Sompnoures tale

Withoute fraude or cauillacioun
If were it quod the freze upon my feyth
And therewith al his honde in his he leyth
To here my feyth in me shal be no lache
Than put thy hond adoun right by my backe
Sayde this man and grope wele behynde
Byneth my buttoke there shalt thou fynde
A thyng that I haue hydde in pryuyte
A thought this freze that shal go with me
And down his honde he launcheth to the clyffe
In hope for to fynde there som gode yeste
And whan this seke man felt this freze
Aboute his towel groppng here and there
Amyd his honde he let the freze a farte
Ther is no capul drawyng in a carte
That myght haue let a farte of suche a soun
The freze by stert as doth a wode pony
A fals chorle quod he for coches bones
This hast thou in despyte do for the nonys
Thou shalt abyde this fart if that I may
His meny with that herde suche aray
Come leppng in and chased oute the freze
And forth he goth with a ful heuy chere
And fet his felawe there as lay his store
He looked as he were a wyld boze
And grynteth with the tethe so was he wrothe
A sturdy paas down to the courte he goth
Where as there woned a man of grette honoure
To whome that he was alwey confessoure
This worthy man was lorde of that byllage
This freze cam as he were in a rage
Where as this lorde sat etyng at the borde
Wyneth myght the freze speke one worde

The Somynours Tale

Tyl at the last he sayde god you se
This lord gan loke and sayd benedicite
What freze John what maner worlde is this
I se wele some thyng ther is a mys
peloke as though the wode were ful of theuys
Syt down and tel me what youre greue is
And it shal be amended if that I may
I haue quod he had a despyte to day
God yelde it you a down in youre byllatte
That in this worlde ther nys so poure apage
That he nolde haue abhomyngnacioun
Of that I haue rescypued in the toun
And yet ne greuyth me nothyng so sore
As that the olde chorle with locke a hore
Blasphemyd hath oure holy couent eke
Now mayster quod the lord I you beseeke
No mayster sir quod he but seruptoure
Though I haue had in scole that honoure
God lyketh nat that raby men vs calle
Nothet in market ne in othez lartte halle
No force quod he but tel me al youre greef
Sir quod this freze an odious myschief
This day betydde is to myn ordre and me
And so per consequens in eche degre
Of holy chirche god amend it sone
Sir quod the lord we wote what is to done
Distempere you nat ye be my confessoure
Ye be the salt of the erthe and the sauoure
For goddes loue your pacience now holde
Tel me youre greef. and he anone him tolde
As ye haue herde biforn ye wote wele what
The lady of the house ay stille sat
Tyl she had herde what the freze had sayde

The Sompnoures tale

By goddes modre quod she this blissed mayde
Is ther ought elles tel me feythfully
Madame quod he hou thy nhe pe ther by
How that me thy nket quod she so god me spede
I say a chorle hath do a chorles dede
What sholde I say god let him neuiz the
His seke hede is fulle of banpte
I holde him in a maner of a franspe
Madame quod he by god I shal nat lye
But I in any wyse may on him a wreke
I shal diffame him ouir alle where I speke
That fals blasphemoure whiche that charged me
To parte it that wol nat departed be
To euery p lpe moche with myschaunce
The lord sat styll as he were in a traunce
And in his herte he rollyd bp and down
How that this chorle hath ymagynacioun
To she we suche a probleme to the freze
Neuiz erst oz now herde I of suche a matere
I trowe the deuyt put it in his mynde
In arsmetrye shal thez no man fynde
Bifore this day of suche a questioun
Who sholde make a demonstracioun
That euery man sholde haue lpe his parte
As of a soun oz of sauoure of a farte
O nyce proude chorle I shrewe his face
Lo sires quod the lord with harde grace
Who euiz herde of suche a thyng oz now
To euery man p lpe tel me how
This is an impossible it may nat be
By nyce chorle god let him neuiz the
The romblyng of a farte and euery soun
Nys but of the apez reuerberacioun

The Sompnoures tale

And euir it wastyth lyte and lyte a wey
Ther is noman can deme by my fey
yf that it were departed equaly
What lo my chorle lo yet how shrewdly
Vnto my confessoure to day he spake
gholde him certayn a demonpache
Now ete poure mete and let the chorle go pley
Let him go hang him self a deuyll wey
Now stode the lordes squyer at his borde
That carued his mete and herde worde by worde
Of alle this thyng of whiche I haue you sayde
My lord quod he be ye nat euyl appayed
for I coude telle for a golwe clothe
To you sir freze so ye be nat wrothe
How that this fart sholde euyn delyd be
Among your couent if it lyke sy thee
Tel quod the lord and thou shalt haue anone
A golw clothe by god and by seint John
My lord quod he whan that the wedyr is fayre
Withoute wynde oz perturbyng of ayre
Let bryng a carte whele right into this halle
But so that it haue the spokes al
Twelf spokes hath a carte whele comonly
And bryng me than t welue frezes woot ye why
for thertene is a couent as I gesse
poure confessoure here for his worthynesse
Shal parfouze me by the nombre of his couent
Than shal they knele down by one assent
And to euery spokes ende in this manere
ful sadly lay his nose shal a freze
poure noble confessour the god him saue
Shal holde his nose vpright vndre the naue
Than shal this chorle with belystyf and toughte

The Sompnours tale

As any taboure hydez he y brought
And set him on the whele right of this carte
Upon the naue and make him let a farte
And ye shal se upon peryl of my lyf
By preef whiche that is demonstratyf
That equally the sounde if it wol wende
And eke the stynke oute of the spokes ende
Saue that this worthy man your confessoure
Bicause he is a man of grete honoure
Shal haue the first fruyte as reason is
The noble vsage of frezes yet is this
The worthpest man of them shal first be seruyd
And certaynly he hath it wele deseruyd
He hath to day taught vs so moche gode
With prechyng in the pulpet there he stode
That I may bouche sauf I say for me
He hadde the first smelle of fartes thre
And so wolde al his brethern hardely
He berith him so fayre and so holply
The lord the lady and eke man saue the freze
Sayd that Jankyn spake in this matere
As wele as Dyd or protholome
Touchyng the chorles they sayd subtelte
And high wyt made him speke as he spake
He nys no fool ne no demonpake
And Jankyn hath y wonne a newe gown
My tale is doon we be almost at the tonn

Here endith the Sompnours tale
And here foloweth the prologue of the
Clerke of Oxenforde

The Clerkes prologue of D y e n f o r d e

¶ p r e s t e r k e of D y e n f o r d e o u r e h o o s t s a y d e
y e r y d e a s q u o y a n d s t y l a s d o t h a m a y d e
w e r t n e w s p o u s e d s y t t y n g a t t h e b o r d e
T h i s d a y n e h e r d e I o f y o u r e t o n g a w o r d e
I t r o l y e s t u d y e a b o u t e s o m s o p h y m e
B u t S a l a m o n s a y d e t h a t a l t h y n g h a t h t y m e
f o r g o d d e s s a k e a s h e o f g o d e t h e r e
I t i s n o t y m e n o w t o s t u d y e h e r e
T e l h s s o m m e r y t a l e b y y o u r e f e y
f o r w h a t m a n i s e n t r e d i n t o a p l e y
h e n e d e s m o o t i n t o t h e p l e y a s s e n t
B u t p r e c h i t h n a t a s f r e z e s d o i n l e n t
T o m a k e h s f o r o u r e o l d e s y n n e s w e p e
N e t h a t t h y t a l e m a k e h s n a t t o s i e p e
T e l h s s o m m e r y t h y n g o f a u e n t u r e s
y o u r e t e r m e s y o u r e c o l o u r e s a n d y o u r e f i g u r e s
R e p e t h e m i n s t o r e t y l s o b e t h a t y e e n d y t e
h i g h s t y l e a s w h e n m e n t o l y n g e s w r y t e
S p e h i t h s o p l a y n a t t h i s t y m e I y o u p r a y
T h a t w e m a y v n d e r s t o n d e w h a t y e s a y
T h i s w o r t h y c l e r k e b e n y n g n e l y a n s w e r d
D i s t q u o d h e I a m y o u r e p e r d e
y e h a u e a s n o w o f h s t h e g o u e r n a u n c e
A n d t h e r f o r e I s h a l d o y o u o b e y s a u n c e
A s f e r a s r e a s o n a s h i t h h a r d e l y
I w o l y o u t e l a t a l e w h i c h e t h a t I
L e r n y d a t p a d o w e o f a w o r t h y c l e r k e
A s p r e u y d i s b y h i s w o r d e s a n d h i s w e r k e
h e i s n o w d e d e a n d n a y l e d i n t h e c h e s t e
I p r a y t o g o d y e n e h i s s o u l e g o d e r e s t
f r a u n c e y s p e t r a r k e t h e l a u r e a t p o e t e
h i g h t t h i s c l e r k e w h o s e r e t h o r y p h e s w e t e
E n l u m p n e d a l y t a y l e o f p o e t r y e

The Clerkes prologe of Dvenforde

As lynnandyd of philosophie
Or la we or othez arte particulere
But deeth that wol nat suffre vs dulle here
But as it were the twnklyn of an eye
Them bothe hath slayne al shal we dye
But forth to tel of this worthy man
That taught me this tale as I began
I say that first with high stile he enditeth
Or he the body of his tale writeth
A prohempe in whiche discriueth he
Demounte and of saluces the countre
And spekith of apertyn the hilles hye
That been the boundes of West lumbardye
And of mount beselus in specialle
Where that the po oute of the wel smalle
Takyng his first spryngyng and his sours
That estward euize a cresith in his cours
To emely warde to sferze and benyse
The whiche a long thyng were to deuyse
And truly as to my iugement
Me thynkith it a long impertynent
Saue that him self conueye his matere
But this is his tale as ye may here

Here endith the prologue of the
Clerke of Dvenforde
And here begynneth his tale

The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde



t Here is in the west syde of Itayle
Down at the rute of besulus the colde
A lusty playn habundant of bytaye
Where many a town and toure thou mayst behold
That founded were in tyme of faders olde
And many a nother delytable sight
And saluces this noble countre hight

A Markes somtyme lord was of that londe
As were his worthy eldres him bifoze
And obeysaunt ay redy to his honde
Were alle his liegges bothe lasse and moze
Thus in delyte he lyued and hath doo yore
Beloued and dradde through fauoure of fortune
Bothe of his lordes and eke of his comune

Therwith he was to speke of synagge
The gentyllest y born of lumbardy
A fayre parson a strong and yong of age
And ful of honoure and of curtesye

The Clerkes tale of Wyndesore

Discrete ynough his countre for to gy
Saue in som thynges that he was to blame
And Walter was this yong lordes name

I blame him thus that he considered nat
In tyme compnyng what myght him betyde
But on his lust present was al his thought
As for to haue and hunte on every syde
Wele nyth alle othez cures lete he syde
And eke he nolde and that was worst of al
Wedde no wyf for ought that myght befall

Only that poynte his people bare so sore
That flok meke on a day they to him went
And one of them that wysest was of lore
Wher that the lord wolde best assent
That he sholde tel him what his people ment
Wher he coude he shewe wele suche matere
He to the marques sayd as ye shal here

O noble marques your humanyte
Assureth us and proueth us hardynesse
As ofte as tyme is of necessity
That we to you may telle our heynesse
Acceptith now lord of your gentylnes
That we with pytous hert vnto you pleyne
And let you erpe nat my boyce dysdeyne

Al haue I nat to done in this matere
More than a nother man hath in this place
Yet for asmoche as ye my lord so dere
Haue alwey shewed me fauour and grace
I dar the better aske of you a space
Of audience to shewe our request
And ye my lord to do right as you lest

For certis lord so wele bespyketh you
And al your werke and enir haue doon that we

The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

Ne coude nat oure self deuyse how
we myght lyue in moze felicite
Saue one thyng lord if youre wyf be
That for to be a weddyd man you lest
Than were youre people in souerayne hertes rest
Howe ye youre hede vndre the blissful yoke
Of soueraynte and nat of seruyse
Whiche that men clepith sponsayle or wedlohe
And thynkith lord among youre wyttes wyse
How that oure daies passe in sondry wyse
For though we slepe or wake ryne or ryde
As flyeth the tyme it wol noman abyde

And though youre grene pouthe floure as yet
Increpith age as styffe as any stone
And deth manasshet euery age and smyte
In eche estate for there eschapith none
And also certayn as we knowe echone
That we shal dye and vncertayn we alle
Been of the day whan deth shal on vs falle

Acceptith than of vs the true entent
That yet neuiz refuseden youre heste
And we wol lord if ye wol assent
These you a wyf in short tyme at the lest
Born of the gentyllest and of the mest
Of al ytalie so that it ought seme
Honoure to god and you as I can deme

Delpyer vs oute of alle this besy drede
And take a wyf for high goddes sake
For if so be it be falle as god forbide
That through youre deth youre lyne sholde stakke
And that a straunge successoure sholde take
Your heritage o wo were vs on lyue
Wherfore we pray you hastely to wyue

The Clerk's tale of Wyenforde

Her meke prayez and her pytous chere
Made the marques herte for to haue pyte
ye wol quod he myn owne people dere
To that I neuer erst thought constreyne me
I me reioised of my lyberte

That selden tyme is founde in maziage
There I was fre I must be in seruage

But nathelesse I se youre true entent
And truste vpon youre wytte and haue done ap
Wherfore of my fre wyf I wol assent
To wedde me as sone as euir I may
But there as ye haue profezed me to day
To chese me a wyf I you relece

That chose I pray you of that profez sece
For god it wote that children oft been
Onlye theire worthy elders them bifoze
Bounte cometh al of god nat of the streyn
Of whiche they be gendred and y boze
I truste in goddes bounte and therfore
My mariage and myn astate and rest
I him betake he may do as him lyfte

Lette me allone in the syng of my wyf
That charge vpon my bake I wol endure
But I you pray and charge vpon your lyf
That what wyf I take ye may assure
To worshippe her whiles her lyf may dure
In worde in werke both here and euery where
As she an emperours doughter were

And ferthermore this shal ye swere that ye
Apenst my chose shal neuiz grutche ne stryue
For sithen I shal forgo my lyberte
At youre request as euir moot I thryue
There as my herte is sette there wol I wyue

The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

and but ye wol assent in suche manere
I pray you spekeith nomore of this matere
With herty wyl they sweryn and assentyn
To alle this thyng there sayd nat one wight nay
Besekyng him of grace or that that they wentyn
That he wolde graunte them a certayn day
Of his spousaile as sone as euer he may
For yet alwey many of the people dredde
Lest the marques wolde no wyf wedde

He graunted them a day suche as them lest
On whiche he wolde be weddyd sikerly
And sayde he dyd al this at their request
And they with humble entent buyomly
Knelynge vpon their knees ful reuerently
Him thanked alle and thus they haue an ende
Of their entent and home agayn they wende

And herupon he toke his officers
And comaunded for the fest for to puruey
And to his pryvy knyghtes and squyers
Suche charge gaue as he lyst on them ley
And they to his comaundment obeie
And eche of them doth al his diligence
To do vnto that fest high reuerence

Prima pars Grisildidis

n At fez fro that paleys honourable
There as this marques shope his mariage
There stode a thowpe of sight ful delytable
In whiche that poure folke of that byllage
Hadde their bestes and their herbygge
And of their laboure toke their sustenaunce
After that the erthe gaue them habundaunce

The Clerkes tale of Dopenforde

Among these poure folke ther dwelled a man
Whiche was y holde pourest of them alle
But high god somtyme sende can
His grace into a lytel oyes stalle
Janpcola men of that throwpe him cal
A doughter hadde he fayre ynough to sight
And Grisildes this yong mayden sight

But for to speke of vertuouse beaute
Than was she one the fayrest vndre sonne
And ful poverly y fostryd by was she
No lytuous lust was through her herte y ronne
But ofter of the welle than of the wyne tonne
She dranke and she wolde vertue please
She knewe wele labour but none ydle ease

But though this mayde so tendre were of age
yet in the brest of her virginyte
There was enclosed ryte and sadde corage
And in grete reuerence of charite
Her old poure fadre fostryd she
A fewe shepe sprynnyng on felde she kepte
She wolde nat be ydle tyl she slepte

And whan she homwarde cam she wolde brynnyng
wortys or othez herbes tymes ofte
The whiche she shredde and sethith for her tynnyng
And made her bedde harde and nothyng soft
And ay she kept her faders lpf on lost
With euerichone obeysaunce and diligence
That childe myght do to the faders reuerence

Vpon Grisilde this poure creature
ful oft sithys this marques set his eye
As he rode on huntynge parauenture
And whan it befyl that he myght her a spye
He nat with wanton lokynge of folp

The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

His eyen cast on her but in sad wyse
Upon her cheke he wolde him oft auyse
Commendynge in his hert her womanhede
And eke her vertue passynge any wight
Of so yong age as wele in chere as dede
For though the people had no grete insight
In vertue he considred ful right
Her bounte and disposed him that he wolde
Wedde her only if he euer wolde sholde

The day of weddynge cam but no wight can
Tel what maner woman it sholde be
For whiche meruayle wondred many a man
And sayd they were in pryuyte
Wol nat oure lordes leue yet his banyte
Wol he nat wedde alas alas the while
Why wol he thus him selue and his bettylle

But natheles this marques had do make
Of gemmys set in golde and in a sure
Broches and rynges for Grisildes sake
And of her clothyng toke the mesure
Of a mayde lyke vnto her stature
And eke of her othez orna mentes alle
That vnto suche a weddynge sholde be falle

The tyme of vndryng on the same day
Approchyd that the weddynge sholde be
And al the paleys put was in aray
Bothe halles and chambre eche in his degre
Houses of office stuffed with grete plente
There mayst thou se of deyniteous bytaye
That may be fonnde as fer as lastith y tale

This ryalle marques richely arrayed
Lordes and ladies in his company

The Clerkes tale of Drenforde

The whiche that to the fest were prayed
And of his retenue the bachelery
With many a sowne of sondry melody
Vnto the byllage of whiche I tolde
In this array the right wey haue holde

Grisilde of this god wote ful innocent
That for hez shapen was al this array
To fet water at a welle is went
And cometh home as sone as euir she may
For wele she herde sayd that is the day
That the marques sholde wedde and if she myght
She wolde fayne haue seyn som of that sight

She thought I wol with other maydeynes stond
That been my felawes in oure doze and se
The marques and therfore wyl I sonde
To doon at home as sone as it may be
The laboure whiche that longith to me
And than I may at leysur here beholde
If she this wey vnto the castel holde

And as she wolde ouir the thre sholde gone
The marques cam and gan hez for to calle
And she sat down hez water pot anone
Beside the thre sholde in an oves stalle
And down vpon hez knees she gan to fal
And with sadde countenaunce kneled styl
Tyl she had herde hez soueraynes lordes wyl

This thoughtful markes spake vnto the mayde
Ful sobirly and sayd in this manere
Where is youre fadre o Grisildes he sayde
And she with reuerence and humble there
Aunswerde lorde he is al redy here
And in she goth withouten lenger let
And to the marques she hez fadre fet

The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

He by the honde than toke this olde man
And sayd thus whan he hadde him a syde
Janpcula I nethez may ne can
The plesaunce lenger of my herte hyde
If that thou bouchesauf that so betyde
Thy doughter wol I take oz that I wende
As to my wyf into her lyues ende

Thou louest me I wote it wele certayn
And art my feythful siege man boze
And al that lyketh me I dar wele sayn
It lyketh the and specially therfore
Tel me that poynte that I sayde bifoze
And if thou wylt into that purpos draue
To take me for thy sonne in laue

This sodeyn caas this man astoned so
That rede he weyt abasshyd and al quakynge
He stode. Innethe sayd he wordes mo
But only thus lord quod he my wyllynge
Is as your wyl ne agaynst your lykynge
I wol no thyng ye be my lord so dere
Right as you lyst gouerneth this matere

yet wol I quod this markes softly
That in your chambre I and you and she
haue a collacion and wotest thou why
for I wol aske if it her wyl be
To be my wyf and reule her after me
And al this shal be do in thy presence
Inyl nat speke oute of thy audience

And in the chambre while they were aboute
her tretees whiche as ye shal after here
The people cam into the house al withoute
And wondred them in hou honest manere
And so tentefly kept her fader dere

The Clerkes tale of Dopenforde

But btterly grisilde Wondre myght
For neuiz erst ne sa we she suche a sight

No Wondre is though she were stoned
To se so grete a gest come in that place
She neuir was to no suche gesses y Woned
For whiche she lohed with ful pale face
But shortly forth this matere for to chace
These been the wordes that the markes sayd
To this berzy benyngne seythful mayde

Grisilde he sayde ye shal wele vnderstond
It lyketh vnto poure fadre and vnto me
That I you wedde and eke it may so stonde
As I suppose ye wyl that it so be
But thies demaundes as he I ferst quod he
That sithen it shalbe done in hasty wyse
Wol ye assent oz elles you auyse

I say thus be ye redy with gode herte
To al my lust and that I frely may
As me best thynkith though ye laugh oz smert
And neuiz ye to gruche nyght ne day
Whan I say ye that ye say nat onys nay
Nothet by worde ne by frounyng countenaunce
Swere this and here I swere oure alliaunce

Wondryng vpon these wordes quakyng for drede
She sayd lord indigne and vnworthy
I am to suche honoure as ye me bede
But as ye wol pouz self right so wol I
And here I swere that neuiz wyllpyngly
In werke ne thought I wol you disobeye
For to be dede though me were loth to dye

This is ynough grisilde myn quod he
And forth he goth with a ful sobre chere
Dute at the doze and after cam she

The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

And to the people he sayde in this manere
This is my wyf quod he that stondith here
Honoureth her and loveth her I you pray
Who so me loveth ther is no more to say

And for that nothyng of her olde here
She sholde bryng into his house he badde
That women sholde dispoyle her there
Of whiche these ladies were nat ful gladd
To handel her clothes where in she was cladde
But natheles this mayde bright of hew
fro foote to hede they clothed her alle new

Her heis they hempte that lay vntressyd
fynl rudely and with theire fynghers smale
A crowne on her hede they haue ydressyd
And set her ful of ouches grete and smale
Of her array what shulde I make a tale
Whneth the people her knewe for her fayrnesse
Whan she translatyd was in suche riches

This marke hath her spoused with a ryng
Brought for the same cause and than her set
Upon an horse snowe white ful wele amblyng
And to his paleys or he lengere let
With iopfulle people that her ledde and mette
Conueyed her and thus the day they spende
In reuel tyl the sonne gan discende

And shortly forth this tale for to chace
I say that to this newe markefesse
God hath suche fauoure sent of his grace
That it ne sempd by no lykelenes
That she was born and fed in rudenesse
As in a cote or in an oves stalle

But nourished in an emperours halle
To every wight she wopen is so dere

The Clerkes tale of Dopenforde

And worshipful that folke there she was bore
And from her birthe knewe her yere by yere
Wherewith trowed they but durst haue swore
That to Janicula of which I spake before
She daughter was for as by coniecture
Them thought she was a nother creature
For though that euir vertuous was she
She was encreased in suche excellence
Of thewes gode set in high bounte
And so discrete and faire of eloquence
So by nyghte and so digne of reuerence
And coude so the peoples hertes embrace
That eche her loued that looked in her face

Not only of saluces in the toun
Publissed was the bounte of her name
But eke besyde in many a region
If one sayde wele another sayde the same
So spreadde of her bounte the fame
That men and women bothe yong and olde
Goon to saluces vpon her to beholde

This walter lowly nay but ryally
Wedded hath with fortunat honeste
In goddes peaslyueth ful honestly
At home and out ward grace ynough hadde he
And for he sawe that vndre lowe degre
Was honest vertue hyd the people him helde
A prudent man and that is seen ful selde

Not only grisilde though her wyf
Coude al the feet of wyfly humblesnes
But eke whan that the caas requyred it
The comune proufet coude she redresse
There nas discorde rancor ne heynnes
In al the londe that she coude it apeas

The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

And wysely Bryng them in rest and eas
Though her husbonde were absent or none
If gentylmen or othez of that countre
were wroth she wolde bryng them at one
So wyse and ryte wordes had she
and in iugement so grete equyte
That she from heuyn sent was as men wende
People to saue and euery wrong to amende

Nat long tyme after that this grisilde
was weded she a doughter had y boze
Al had her lyuez boze a hnaue childe
Glade was the marques and the folke therfore
for though a mayde childe cam al bifoze
She may vnto a hnaue childe attayne
By lychehode sithen she nys nat barzayne

Explicit pars secunda
Et sequitur pars tercia

t Her syl as it fallith ofte tyme mo
Whan that this childe had soked but a throlwe
This markes in his herte longith so
To tempte his wif her sadnes to knowe
That he ne myght oute of his hert throlwe
This mervaylous desize his wif to assay
Nedeles god wote he thought her to affrey
He hadde assayed her ynough of tyme bifoze
And sonde her enir good what nedith it
Her for to tempte and alwey more and more
Though som man pryse it for a subtel wyt
But as for me I say ful euyl it syt
To assay a wyf whan it is no nede
And put her in aunguysshe and in drede

The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

For whiche this markes brought in this maner
He cam allone a nyght there as she lay
With sterne face and right hylp chere
And sayde thus grisilde quod he that day
That I you toke fro poure arzaie
And put you in estate of high noblesse
Ye haue nat that forgotten as I gesse

I say grisilde the present dignyte
In whiche I haue put you as I trowe
Makith you nat forgetful for to be
That I you toke in poure estate ful towe
For any wele ye must your selue knowe
Take hede of euery worde what I say
There is no wight that herith But we trowe
Ye wote your self hou that ye cam here

In to this house it is nat long a go
And though to me ye be both leef and dere
Vnto my gentylles be no thyng so
They say to them it is grete shame and wo
For to be subgette and be in seruage
To the that born art in so smalle a village

And namely sithen thy doughter was y bore
These wordes haue they spoken doutles
But I desire as I haue doon bifoze
To lyue my lyf with them in rest and peas
I may nat in this caas be rechelles
I must do with thy doughter for the best
Nat as I wolde but as my people lyst

And yet god wote this is ful lothe to me
But natheles withoute your wyttynng
I wol nat do but this I wol quod he
That ye to me assente as to this thyng
Shewe now poure pacience in your workynng

The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

That ye me hight and swore in yone byllage
That day that made was oure mariage

Whan she hadde herde al this she nat ameyd
Nether in worde in chere ne in countenaunce
For as it semed she was nat aggreuyd
She sayth lord al lyth in your plesaunce
My child and I with hartely obeysaunce
Been your owne and ye may saue and spylle
Your owne thyng do ye after your wyl

Ther may be nothyng so god my soule saue
Lychyng to you that may displease me
Ne I desire no thyng in any wise to haue
Ne drede for to lese saue only ye
This wyl is in myn herte and ay shal be
No length of tyme or deth may this deface
Ne turne my corage to none othez place

Glad was this marques of her aunsweryng
But yet it semyd as it were nat so
Al drepy was his chere and his lokyng
Whan that he sholde oute of the chambre go
Sone after this a furlong wey or two
He pryuely hath tolde al his entent
Vnto a man and to his wyf him sent

A maner of a seriaunt was this prey man
The whiche that feythfulle he founde had
In thynges grete and eke suche folke wel can
Done excusacioun in thynges badde
The lord knewe wele that he him loued and drad
And whan this seriaunt knewe his lordes wyl
In to the chambre stalked him ful styl

Madame he sayde ye must forgeue it me
Though I do thyng whiche I am constreyned
Ye be ful wyse and ful wele knowe ye

The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

That lordes heedis may nat be feyned
Though I do thyng whiche I am constreyned
But men must nede vnto theire lust obeie
And so wol I thez is no more to seie

This childe I am comaunded for to take
And spake nomore but oute the childe he hent
Dispitously and gan a chere to make
As though he wolde haue slayn it or he went
Grisilde must alle suffre and concent
And as a lambe she sytteth meke and stille
And lete this cruel seriaunt do his wyl

Suspecious was the fame of this man
Suspecte his face suspecte his worde also
Suspecte the tyme in whiche he this began
Allas her doughter that she loued so
She wende he wolde haue slayn it tho
But neuirtheles she nether wept ne sigghed
Confermyd her to that the marques lyked

But at the last speke than she began
And mekely she to the seriaunt prayde
So as he was a very gentylman
That she myght her childe kysse onys or he dyed
And in her barme she the lytel childe leyde
With ful sadde face and gan the childe to blysse
And luffed it and after gan it kysse

And thus she sayde in her benygne voyce
Fare wele my childe I shal the neuir se
But sithen I haue the markyd with the croyce
Of thyke fadre blissed moot thou be
That for he dyed vpon the croce of tre
Thy soule lytel childe I him betake
For this nyght shalt thou dye for my sake
I trow that to a noyce in this caas

The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

It had be herde this routhe for to se
Wele myght a modre than haue cryed alas
But natheles so sadde and stedefast was she
That she endured al aduersite
And to the seriaunt mehely she sayde
Haue here agayn poure lytel yong mayde

Goth now quod she and do my lordes beest
But one thyng wyl I pray you of poure grace
But if my lorde forbade you at the leest
Burieth this lytel body in som place
That beestes ne foules it to rase

But he to that purpos no worde wolde say
But toke the childe and went vpon his wey

This seriaunt cam to the lorde agayn
And of Grisylides wordes and hez chere
He tolde him poynte by poynte short and playn
And him presented with his doughter dere
Sum what this lorde had re wthe in his manere
But natheles his purpos held he styll
As lordes doon whan they wol haue theire wyl

And had his seriaunt that he pryncely
Shulde the childe soft wynde and wrappe
With alle the circumstaunces tenderly
And carpe it in a coffre or in a lappe
But on peyne his hede of for to swappe
That noman sholde know of this entent
Ne whens he cam ne whether that he went

But at Boleyn he to his sustre dere
That ilke tyme of paup was countesse
He sholde it take and she we hez this matere
Discreyning hez to do her besynesse
This childe to fostre in alle gentylnesse
And whose childe that it is he bad her hyde

The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

From euery wight for ought that may betyde

The seriaunt goth and hath fulfilled this thing
But to this markes now retourne we
For now goth he ful fast ymagnynng
If by his wyues cheze he myght se
Or by her worde perceyue that she
Were chaunged but neuiz coude he fynde
But euiz in one lyke sadde and kynde

As gladd as humble as besy in seruice
And eke in loue as she was wont to be
Was she to him and in euery maner wyse
Ne of her doughter nat one worde spake she
Non accident for none aduersite
Was seyn in her ne neuiz her doughter name
Ne named she in earnest ne in game

Explicit tertia pars

Et incipit pars quarta

i In this estate ther past by foure yere

Or she with childe was bat as god wolde
A man chylde she bare by this waltere
Ful gracious and fayre for to beholde
And whan that folke it to his fadre tolde
Nat only he but alle his countre mery
Was for this chylde and god they thanke and hery
Whan it was t wo yere olde and fro the brest

Departyd fro his nozpe spon a day
This marques caught yet a nother lyst
To tempte his wyf yet ofter if he may
Vnnedeles was she temptyd in assay
But weddyd men ne can no mesure
Whan that they fynde a pacient creature

The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

Wyf quod this marques ye haue herde or this
gyf people berith heuy siberly oure mariage
And namely sithen my sonne y born is
Now it is worse than euil in al oure age
The murmure sleth my hert and my corage
For to myn erys cometh the voyce so smert
That it ful nyght distroyed hath myn herte

Now say they thus whan Walter is agone
Than shal the blode of Janycula succede
And be oure lorde for othez haue we none
Suche wordes sayth my people oute of drede
Wele ought I of suche murmur take hede
For certaynly I drede al suche sentence
Though they nat pley in myn audience

I wolde lyue in pease if that I myght
Wherfore I am disposed ful vtterly
As this sustre sezuyd by nyght
Right so I thynke to serue him pruely
This warne I you that ye nat sodenly
Dute of pouz self for no wo sholde outray
Be patient and therof I you pray

I haue quod she sayd thus and euil shal
I wol nothyng in no maner certayn
But as you lyst nothyng greuyth me at al
Though that my doughter and my sonne be slayn
At pouz comaundment this is for to sayn
I haue hadde no parte of children t weyn
But first seeknes and after wo and peyn
ye been oure lorde doth with poure owne thyng
Right as you lyst a shith no rede of me
For as I left at home al my clothyng
Whan I cam first to you right so quod she
Left I my wyf and alle my liberte

The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

And toke youre clothyng wherfore I you pray
Doth youre plesaunce I wol youre lust obey
And certis if I hadde any prescience
Yowr wyf to knowe or ye youre lust me tolde
I wolde it do withouten negligence

But now I wote yowr lust and what ye wolde
Al yowr plesaunce ferm and stable I holde
For wyf I that my deth myght do you ease
Right gladly wolde I dye you to please

Deth may nat make no comparison
Unto yowr loue. and whan this markes say
The constaunce of his wyf he cast a down
His eyen two and wondred that she may
In pacience suffre al this maner aray
And forth he goth with drezy countenance
But to his herte it was ful grete plesaunce

This byle seriaunt in the same wyse
That her doughter caught right so he
Or worse if men can worse deuyse
Hath hent her sonne that ful is of beaute
And euir in one so pacient was she
That she no chere made of heuynes
But kyst her sonne and after gan him bles

Saue she prayed him if that he myght
Her lytel sonne he wolde in the erthe graue
His tendre lymmes delycate in sighte
Fro foules and fro bestes it to saue
But she none othez aunswere of him myght haue
He went his wey as he nothyng ne rough
But to boloyne he it tenderly brought

This marques wondred euir lengre the more
Upon her pacience and if that he
Ne hadde knowe sothly ther bifoze

The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

That partlytely her children loued she
He wolde haue wende that of som subtelte
And of malice and for cruelle corage

That she had sustryd this with sadde corage

But wele he knewe that next him self certayn

She loued her childe best in any wyse

But now of women wolde I aske ful fayne

If these assayes myght nat suffice

What coude a sturdy husbonde more deuyse

To preue her wyfhode or her stedefastnesse

And he contynuyng euir in sturdynesse

But ther be folke of suche condicion

That whan they haue a certayn purpos take

That can nat stynt of theire entencion

They wyl nat of theire first purpos slake

But right as they were bounde at a stake

Right so this marques hath fully purposed

To tempte his wif as he was first disposed

He wayted if by worde or countenaunce

That she to him was chaunged of corage

But neuir coude he fynde any variaunce

She was ay in one herte and in visage

And ay the fether that she was in age

The more trewe if it were possible

She was to him in loue and more penyble

For whiche it sempd thus that of them two

There was but one wyl for but as walter list

The same lust was her plesaunce also

And god bethanked al fyl for the best

She she wold wele for none worldly hurst

A wif as of her selue no thyng ne sholde

Wyl in effecte but as her husbonde wolde

The sclandre of walter wondre wyde spradde

The Clerkes tale of Dogenforde

That of cruel herte he ful wychedly
For he a poure woman weddyd hadde
Hath murdered bothe his children pryuely
Suche murmure was among them comonly
No wondre is for to the peoples ere
Ther cam no worde but that they murdered were
For whiche there as the people there bifoze
Had loued him wele the schaunder of his defame
Made them that him they hated therfoze
To be a murder is an hateful name
But natheles for earnest ne for game
He of his cruel purpos wolde nat stynt
To tempte his wif was alle his entent
Whan that his doughter twelue yere was of age
He into the courte of Rome in subtel wyse
Enfourmed of his wyl sent his messagge
Comaundyng them suche bulles to deuyse
As to his cruel purpos may suffice
How that the pope had as for his peoples rest
That he shulde wedde another wyf if he lyst
I say he had they shulde countrefete
The popes bulles makyng mencion
That he hath leue his first wyf for to lete
As by the popes owne dispensacioun
To stynt the rancor and the discencion
Betwene his people and him thus sayd the bulle
The whiche they haue publisshed at the fulle
The rude people as no wondre ne is
Wende ful wele that it had be right so
But whan these tyoynge cam to grisidie
I deme that the herte of her was ful wo
But she ylyke sad was enirmoo
Disposed was this humble creature

The Clerkes tale of Wyenfoorde

The aduersite of fortune al to endure
Abydyng enir his lust and his plesaunce
To whom that she was yeven herte and al
As to his berz worldly suffisaunce
But shortly if I this story tel shal
This marques writen hath in especial
A lettre in whiche he she with his entent
And secretly to Boleyne hath it sent

To the erle of paup whiche had tho
Weddyd his sustre prayed him specially
To bryng home aye his children two
In honourable state al openly
But one thyng he him prayed btterly
That he no wight though they dyd enquire
Sholde nat tel whoos children that they were

But say the mayde shal wedded be
Vnto the marques of saluces anone
And as this erle was prayed so dyd he
For at the day set he on his wey is gone
Towarde Saluces and lordes many one
In riche array this mayde for to gyde
Her yong brother rydyng by his syde

Arraped ful freshe in her manere
This freshe mayde ful of gemmys clere
Her brother whiche seyn pere was of age
Arraped ful freshe in his manere
And thus in gret noblesse and glade there
Towarde saluces spedynge their iournay
Fro day to day they ryden in their wey

Explicit pars Quarta
Et incipit pars Quinta

The Clerkes tale of Drenforde

a Mong al this after the Wicked vsage
This marques is yet aboute to tempte more
The vtterest preef of her corage
Fully to haue experience and loze
If she were as steadfast as bifoze
He on a day in open audience
Iul boistously hath sayd here this sentence
Certis grisilde I hadde ynough of plesaunce
To haue you to my wif for youre godenesse
As for your trouthe and youre obaysaunce.
Nat for youre pygnage ne for youre richesse
But now knowe I in werzy sothfastnes
That in grete losshippe if I wyl anyse
There is grete seruitnde in sondre wyse
I may nat do as euery plowman may
My people constreyneth me for to take
A nother wif and cry day by day
And eke the pope rancor for to slake
Concentith it that dar I vndretake
And truly this moche I wol you say
My newe wif is comyng by the way
Be strong of herte and boyde anone her place
And that dowez that ye brought vnto me
Takith it aye I geue you leue of my grace
Retourneth to your faders house quod he
No man may haue alwey prosperite
With euery herte I rede you to endure
The stroke of fortune or of auenture
And she agayn answered in patience
My lord quod she I wote and wiste alwey
How that betwene youre magnificence
And my pouerte. no wight can ne may
Make any comparison. it is no nay

The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

I ne helde me neuir digne in no manere
To be youre Wyf ne be youre chambere
And in this house there ye me lady made
The high god take I for wytnes
And also wysely he my soule glade
I neuir helde me lady ne maystres
But humble seruaunt to your worthynes
And euir shal while that my lyf my dure
Aboue euery worldly creature

That ye haue solong of youre benygnyte
Holde me in high honoure and nobley
Where as I was nat worthy for to be
That thanke I god and you to whom I prey
For yelde it you ther is nomore to say
Vnto my fader gladly wold I wende
And with him duelle to my lyues ende

There I was fostred of a childe ful smalle
Tyl I be dede my lyf there wol I lede
A wydowe cleue in body herte and alle
For sithen I gaue to you my maydenhede
I am your true wyf it is no drede
God shelde suche a lordes wyf to take
A nother man to husbonde or to make

And of youre newe wyf god of his grace
So graunte you wele and prosperite
For I wol gladly yelde her my place
In whiche I was blissful wont to be
For sithen it lyketh you my lord quod she
That somtyme were al my hertes rest
That I shal go I wol go whan ye lyst

But there as ye me profre suche dowayr
As I first brought it is wele in my mynde
It were my wrechid clothes nothyng fayr

The Clerkes tale of Dopenforde

The Whiche to me were harde to fynde
O gode god how gentyl and how kynde
ye semyd by your speche and your bisage
The day that made was our mariage

But soth is sayde alwey I fynde it trewe
For in effecte y preynd it is on me
Loue is nat olde as whan it is newe
But certis forde for none aduersite
To dye in this caas it shal nat be
That euir in worde in werke I shal repente
That I you geue my herte in hool entent

My forde ye wote that in my faders place
ye dyd me strypp oute of my pour wede
And richely ye me cladde of your grace
To you brought I nought ellys but of drede
But feyth nakidnesse and my maydenhede
And here agayn my clothyng I restore
And eke my weddyng ryng for euir more

The remenaunt of your ielvelles redy they be
Within your chambre I dar it saufly seyn
Naked oute of my faders house quode she
I cam and naked must I turne agayn
Al your plessaunce folowe wolde I feyne
But yet I hope it be nat your entent
That I smokles oute of your paleys went
ye coude nat do so dishonest a thyng
That thiske wombe in whiche your children lay
Sholde bi fore the people in my walkyng
Be seen al bare wherfore I you pray
Let me nat lyke a worme go by the way
Remembre you myn owne forde so dere
I was your wyf though I vnworthy were
Wherfore in guerdon of my madaynhede

The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

Whiche that I brought and nat agayn bere
As bouche sauf as gyue me to my mede
But suche a smoke as I was wont to were
That I therwith may wrye the wombe of here
That was your wyf and here I take my leue
Of you myn owne lord lest I you greue

The smoke quod he that thou hast upon thy bake
Let it be styfle and bere it forth with the
But wel vnneth that worde he spake
But wente his wey for routhe and pyte
Bifore the folke her self striped hath se
And in her smoke with fote and here alle bare
Tolwarde her faders house is she fare

The folke her folowynge wepyng in her wey
And fortune euil they cursed as they gone
But she fro wepyng kept her eyendrye
Ne in this tyme worde spake she none
Her fader that thise tydnynges herde anone
Cursed the day and the tyme that nature
Shope him to be a lynes creature

For oute of doute this olde poure man
Was euil suspecte of her mariage
For euil he demyd sithen it began
That whan the lord had fulfilled his corage
He wolde thynke it were a desperage
To his estate so lowe for to light
And borden her as sone as euil he myght

Ayent his doughter hastely goth he
For he by noyse of folke knewe her comyng
And with her olde cote as it myght be
He heueryd her ful sorowfully wepyng
But on her body myght he it nat bryng
For rude was the clothe and she more of age

The Clerkes tale of Dopenforde

By daies fele than was her mariatte
Than with her fadre for a certayn space
Duellid this floure of wysly pacience
That neuir by her worde ne by her face
Bifore the folke ne in her absence
Ne she wold she that her was done offence
Ne of her high estate no remembraunce
Ne hadde she as by any maner countenaunce
No wondre was for in her grete estate
Her goost was euir in pleyne humylite
No tendre mouthe ne herte delicate
No pompe ne semblaunce of rialte
But ful of paciente benygnyte
Discrete and prydelesse and ay honourable
And ay to her husbonde meke and stable

Men speke of Job and moost for his humblenesse
As clerkes whan them lyst can wele endite
Namely of men but in sothfastnes
Though clerkes pryse women but a lyte
Ther can no man in humblenes them acquyte
As women can ne can be half so true
As women been but it be falle of newe

Explicit Quinta pars
Et incipit pars Sexta

f Ro Boloyne is this erle of paup come
Of whiche the fame spronge bothe les & moze
And in the peoples eris alle and some
Was tolde how that he a newe markefesse
With him brought in suche pompe and riches
Thot neuir was ther seen with mannys ey
So noble araye in al west lumbardy
The marques whiche that shope and knewe al this

The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

Or that this erle was come sent his messagge
for that sely poure creature Grysildis
and she with humble herte and glade bysagge
Nat with no swellpyng thought in her coragge
Cam at his heest and on her knees her sette
and reuerently and wysely she him gret

Grysilde quod he my Wyl is ful btterly
This mayden that weddyd shalbe to me
Receyued be to morowe also ryally
As it is possible in myn house to be
And eke that euery wight in his degre
haue his estate in spttynge and in seruise
and high plesaunce as ye can best deuyse

I haue no woman suffisaunt certayn
The chambres for to araye in ordeuaunce
After my lyst and therfore wolde I sayn
That thyn were al suche manere of gouernaunce
Thou knowest eke of olde al my plesaunce
Though thyn araye be badde and euyl besey
Do thy deuoure yet at the lest wey

Nat only lorde that I am glade quod she
To do youre lust but I desire also
you first to please and serue in my degre
Withoute fayntyng and shal be euer mo
Ne neuir for no wele ne for no wo
Ne shal the goost within my herte stynt
To loue you best with alle my true entent

And with that worde she gan the house to dighit
And tables for to sette and beddes for to make
And peyned her to do alle that she myght
Prayng the chamberers for goddes sake
To haste them and fast swepe and shake
And she the moost seruyfable of alle

The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

Hath euery chambre arrayed and his halles
Aboute the bndryn this erle to gan light
That with him brought these noble children twey
For whiche the people ran to se that sight
Of their arraye richely they were beseye
And than at erst among them they sey
That walter was no fooler though that him lest
To chaunge his wyf for it was for the best

For she is fayrer as they deme alle
Than is grisilde and more tendre of age
And fayrer fruyte bitwene them shal fal
And more plesaunt for her high lynnage
Her brother che so fayre was of bysage
That them to se the people hath caught plesaunce
Comendynge now the marques gouernaunce

O stormy people euer vnfadedde and vntrue
By vndiscrete and chaungynge as a bane
Delityng euer in romble that is new
For lyke the mone by waye and wane
By ful of clappynge dere ynough a Jane
Youre dome is fals youre constaunce euer preyeth
A ful grete foule is he that on you leueth

Thus sayd sad folke in that cite
Whan that the people garyd by and down
For they were glade right for the noueste
To haue a newe lady of their toun
No more of this now make I mencion
But to grisilde agayn I wyl me dresse
And tel her constaunce and her besynesse

Ful besyn was grisilde in euery thyng
That to the fest was tho appertynent
Right naught was she abashed of her clothyng
Though it were rude and somdele eke to rent

The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

But with glade chere to the gate is went
With othere folke to grete the marhefesse
And after that doth her besynesse

With right glade chere she his gastes receyued
And so connyngly eche in his degre
That no defaute no man perceyued
But ay they wondred what she myght be
That in so poure array was for to se
And coude suche honoure and reuerence
And worthely they prysen her prudence

In alle this meane while she ne stynte
This mayde and eke her brother to comende
With alle her hert in ful benygne entent
So wele that no man coude her pryce amende
But at the last whan that lordes wende
To sitte down to mete he gan to calle
Grisilde as she was besy in the halle

Grisilde quod he as it were in his pley
How lyketh the my wyf and her beaute
Right wele quod she my lord for in gode fep
A fayrer sawe I neuir none than is she
I pray to god yee her gode prosperite
And so hope I he wol to you sende
Plesaunce ynough to your lyues ende

O thing I beche you and warne also
That ye nat pryke with no tourmentynge
This tendre mayde as ye haue doo moo
For she is fostred in her nozysing
More tenderly and to my supposynge
She coude nat aduersite wele endure
Asconde a poure fostred creature

And whan this walter sawe her pacience
Her glade chere and no malice at alle

The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

And he so ofte hadde do to her offence
And she ay constant and sadde as a wal
Contynuyng euir her innocence ouir alle
This sturdy marques gan his hert dresse
To rewe spon her wisly stedefastnes

This is ynough grisilde myn quod he
Be now no more agast ne euil appayed
I haue thy feyth and thy benygnyte
As wele as euir woman was assayed
In grete estate oz pouerly arrayed
Now knowe I dere wyf thy stedfastnes
And her in armes toke and gan her kyss

And she for wondre toke of it no kepe
She herde nat what thyng he to her sayde
She ferde as she had stert oute of her slepe
Tyl she oute of her masidnes abreyed
Grisilde quod he by god that for vs deyed
Thou arte my wyf ne none other I haue
Ne neuir had. so god my soule saue

This is thy doughter whiche thou hast supposed
To be my wyf that other feithfully
Shal be myn heire as I haue purposed
Thou bare him in thy body truly
At Bolepyne haue I kept them pryuely
Take them apen for now mayst thou nat say
That thou hast lorn none of thy children twey

And folke that other wyse haue sayde by me
I warne them wele that I haue doon this dede
For no malice ne for no cruelte
But for to assay in the thy womanhede
And nat to sie my children god forbede
But for to kepe them pryuely and styll
Tyl I thy purpos knowe and thy wyll

The Clerkes tale of Wyenforde

Whan she this herde in swounyng down she fallith
for pytous ioye and after her swounyng
She to bothe her yong children callith
and in her armes ful tenderly wepyng
Embraced them and tenderly kyssyng
ful lyke a modre with her salt teris
She badith bothe theire bisage and her hires

O whiche a pytous thyng it was to se
her swounyng and her pytous boyce to here
Graunt mercy lord god thanke you quod she
That ye haue saued me my children dere
Now reche I neuiz to be dede euyn here
Sithen I stonde in your loue and in your grace
Nodoute of deth ne whan my spirite pace

O tendre o dere o yong children myne
your woful modre wende ful stede fastly
That cruel houndes or som foule wermyng
had etyn you but god of his mercy
and your benygne fadre so tenderly
hath doon you kepe and in that same stounde
al sodenly she swapt down to grounde

And in her swoune so sadly holdith she
her children two whan she gan them embrace
That with grete flight and grete difficulte
The children from her azme gan they arace
O many a teze on many a pytous face
Down ran of them that stode there besyde
Whneth aboute her myght they abyde

Walter her gladith and her sorowe slakith
She ryseth vp and abasseth from her traunce
And euery wight her ioye and fest makith
Tyl she hath caught agayn her countenaunce
Walter doth her so feythfulle plesaunce

The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

That it was deynpte for to se the chere
Bitwene them two now they be mette in fere

Thise ladies whan they theire tyme say
Haue taken her and in to chambere anone
And striped her oute of her rude array
And in a clothe of golde that bright shone
With a crowne of many a riche stone
Upon her hede. they in to the halle her brought
And there she was honoured as her ought

Thus hath this pytous day a blisful ende
For euery man and woman doth his myght
This day in myrthe and reuel to spende
Tyl on the welkyn shone the sterrys light
For more solempne in euery manns sight
This feste was and of grete costage
Than was the reuel of theire mariage

ful many a yere in high prosperite
Pyuen these two in concorde and in rest
And richely his doughter married he
Vnto a lorde one of the worthiest
Of al Itayle and than in pease and rest
His wyues fadre in his courte he kepith
Tyl the soule oute of the body crepith

His sonne succedith in his heritage
In rest and pees after his faders day
And fortunate was eke in mariage
Al put he nat his wyf in grete assay
This worlde is nat so strong it is no nay
As it hath been in olde tymes yore
And herknyth what this autouze sayth therfore

This story is sayd nat for that wyues sholde
folowe Grisilde as in high humylite
for it were importable though they wolde

The Clerkes tale of Dvenforde

But for that enery wight in his degre
Shulde be constante in alle aduersite
As was grisilde wherfore petrazz writeth
This story whiche with high style he enditeth
For sithen a woman was so pacient
Unto a mortal man wele more we ought
Receiue al in gode that god vs sent
For grete shylle is. he preue that he wrought
But he ne temptith no man that he bought
As sayth seint Jame if ye his epistel rede
He preuyth folke but a day it is no nede
And suffreth vs as for oure exercise
With sharpe scorges and aduersite
fulofte to be bete in sondry wise
Nat for to knowe oure wylle but certis he
Dr we were boynhne we al oure freeste
And for oure best is alle his gouernaunce
lete vs lye than in vertuous suffraunce
But one worde herk neth lordynges or I go
It were fulharde to fynde now a dayes
Grisildes in al a countre thre or two
for if they were put to suche assaies
The golde of them hath so badde alayes
With bras. for though it be fayre at eye
It wolde rather brist a two than plye
for whiche here for the wyues loue of Bathe
whoos lye and secte myghty god mayntene
In high maystrye or elles were if scathe
I wyl with lusty hert freshe and grene
Say you a song to glade you I wene
And let vs stynt of earnest matere
herk neth my songe that sayth in this manere

The Clerkes tale of Deynforde

Pennope de Chaucez a les
marietȝ te nr̃e temps

¶ Grisilde is dede and eke hez pacience
And bothe at ones buried in staple
for whiche I crye in open audience
No wedded man so hardy be to assaile
His wifes pacience in truste to fynde
Grysilides. for certayn he shal fayle
¶ A noble wyues ful of high prudence
Let nat humylite poure tynghes nayle
Ne let no clerke haue cause of diligence
To wryte of you a stozp of grete mervayle
As of grisilde pacient and kynde
Lest cheuache you swallow in her entrayle
Foloweth ecco that holdith no silence
But euir aunsweryng at the courtterayle
Be nat a daffyd for your innocence
But sharply take on you the gouernayle
Enprentith wele that lesson in poure mynde
For comune proufet seyth it may anayle
¶ Ye arche wyues stonde th at defence
Sithen ye be strong as is a grete camayle
Ne suffre nat that men do you offence
But shendre wyues as feble in batayle
Beth egre as a tigre is fer in pnde
By clappng as a mylle I you counseyle
Ne dredith them nat do them no reuerence
For though thy husbonde armyd be in mayle
Thy arowes of thy crabbyd eloquence
Shal perse his brest and eke his auentayle
In ielousye I rede eke that thou him blynde
And shalt make him couche as a quayle
If thou be fayre there folke been in presence

The Nonnes prologue

Shewe thou thy visage and thy apparayle
If thou be foule be fre of thy dispence
To gete the frendes ay do thy trauayle
Be ay of chere as light as leef on lynde
And lete him care wepe wrynge and wayle

Here endith the tale of the clerke of Dvenforde

Verba hospitis

t His worthy clerke whan endyde was his tale
Dure hoost sayde and swore by corkes bones
We were spuez than a barlike of ale
My wyf at home herde this legende onys
This is a gentyl tale for the nonys
As to my purpos wylt ye my wylle
But thyng that wylle nat be let it be styll

Here endith the wordes of the hoost

Here begynneth the Nonnes prologue

t He mynistr and noziffyng vnto byces
Whiche that men clepe in englyshe ydelnes
Whiche that is porter of the pate of delices
To eschewen and by their contrary them oppresse
That is to say by leful besynes
Wele ought we to done alle oure entent
Lest that the feende with ydelnesse vs hent
For he with his thousand cordes slye
Contynually vs wayeth to be clappe
Whan he may man in ydelnesse aspye
He can so lightly catche him in his trappe
Tyl that a man be hent right by the lappe
He nys nat ware the feende hath him in honde
Wele ought vs werke and ydelnesse with stonde
And though men drede neuiz for to dye
Yet se men wele by reason doutles

The Nonnes prologue

That ydelnesse is open slogardy
Of whiche ther comyth neuer no gode encrease
And se that slough her holdith in a lees
Only for to slepe and ete and drynke
And to deuoure al that othez swynke

And for to put vs from suche ydelnes
That cause is of grete confusioun
I haue here doon my feythful besynesse
After the legende and translacioun
Right so thy glorious lpf and passioun
Thou with thy garlonde wrought of rose of lyle
The mene I mayde and martyr seint Cecily

And thou that floure arte of virgynnes alle
Of whome that Bernarde lust so wele to wryte
To the at my first begynnynge I calle
Thou comforte of vs wretches do me endite
Thy maydens deth that way through her merite
The eternalle lpf and of the feend victor
As men may after rede in her stoz

Thou mayde and modre doughter of thy sonne
Thou welke of mercy synful soules to cure
In whom that god of bounte chaas for to wonne
Thou humble and high ouir euery creature
Thou noblest so ferforth ouir nature
That no disdeyne thy makez hadde of kynde
His sonne in blode and flesshe to clothe and wynde

Whiche in the cloyster of thy blissful sides
Toke mannes shappe the eterne loue and peas
That of thy tryne compassorde and gyde is
Whom heuyn and erthe and see withouten lees
By herpen and thou virgyn wembelees
Barz of thy body and duellest mayde pure
The creatoure of euery creature

The Nonnes prologue

Assembled is the magnificence
With mercy godenesse and with pyte
That thou that arte the foun of excellence
Nat only helpest them that prayeth the
But often tyme of thy benignyte
Ful frely oz that man thyn helpe seche
Thou gost bifoze and art oure soules leche

Now helpe thou blisful and meke fayre mayde
Ope flempe wretche in this deserte of galle
Thynke on the woman of Canane that sayde
That whelpes ete some of the the cromes smalle
That from theire lordes table been y falle
And though that I vnworthy sonne of eue
Be synful yet accepte my beleue

And for that feyth is dede withoute werkes
So for to werke geue me wytte and space
That I be quytte from thens there moost derke is
O thou that art so fayre and ful of grace
Be myn aduocate in that high place
There as withouten ende is sunge of anne
Thou cristes modre doughter dere of anne

And of thy light my soule in pryson light
That troubled is by the cogitacioun
Of my body and also by the wight
Of erthly lust and false affectioun
O haupn of the refute o saluacioun
Of them that been in sorowe and distresse
Now helpe for to my worke I wol me dresse

yet I pray you that rede that I write
For geue me that I do no diligence
This ilke story besely to endite
For bothe haue I the wordes and the sentence
Of him that at the seyntes reuerence

The Nonnes prologue

The story wrote and folowed her lettende
And pray you that ye wyl my werke amende
First wolde I you the name of seint cecily

Expoune as men may in her story se
It is to say in englysshe heuynnes lyle
For pure chastnes of birginyte

Or for she whithnes had of honeste
And grene of conscience and of good fame
The swete sauoure lyle was her name

Or cecily is to say the wey to blynde
For she ensample was by good techyng

Or elles cecily as I writen fynde

As iopned by a maner conyng

Of heuyn and lya in her in figuryng

The heuyn is set for though of holynes

And lya for her lastyng besynesse

Cecily may eke be sayd in this manere
Wantyng of blyndenesse for her grete light

Of sapience and for her the wys clere

Or elles so this maydens name bright

Of heuyn and leos comyth of whiche by right

Men myght her wele the heuyn of people calle

Ensampler of gode and wyse werkes alle

For leos people in englysshe is for to say

And right as men may in the heuyn se

The sonne and mone the sterres euery wey

Right so men goostly in this mayden fre

Sawynge of feyth the grete magnamynite

And eke the clerenes ful of sapience

And sondry werkes bright of excellence

And right so as these philosophers wyte

That heuyn is swyft and rounde and eke brennyng

Right so was fayre cecily the whyte

The Nonnes Tale

ful swyft and in euery gode workyng
And rounde and hole in gode perseueryng
And brennyng euiz in charite ful bright
Now haue I declared you what she hight

Here endith the Nonnes prologue
And begynneth her tale



His mayden bright Cecily as her legend sayth
Was comen of Romaynes and of noble kynde
And from her cradyl by fostryd in the seyth
Of crist and bare his gospel in her mynde
She neuer seced as I wryten fynde
Of her prayer and god to loue and dride
Besechyng him to kepe her maydenhede
And whan this mayde sholde vnto a man
By weddyd be that was ful yong of age
Whiche that byclipped was Valerian

The Nonnes prologue

The story wrote and folowed her lettende
And pray you that ye wyl my werke amende

First wolde I you the name of seint cecily
Expoune as men may in her story se
It is to say in englysshe heynnes lyle
For pure chastnes of virginyte

Or for she whithnes had of honeste
And grene of conscience and of good fame
The swete sauoure lyle was her name

Or cecily is to say the wey to blynde
For she ensample was by good techyng

Or elles cecily as I writen fynde
As iopned by a maner conyng

Of heyn and lya in her in figuryng
The heyn is set for though of holynes
And lya for her lastyng besynesse

Cecily may eke be sayd in this manere
Wantyng of blyndenesse for her grete light

Of sapience and for her the wys clere

Or elles so this maydens name bright

Of heyn and leos comyth of whiche by right

Men myght her wele the heyn of people calle

Ensample of gode and wyse werkes alle

For leos people in englysshe is for to say

And right as men may in the heyn se

The sonne and mone the sterres every wey

Right so men goostly in this mayden fre

Sawynge of feyth the grete magnamynite

And eke the clerenes ful of sapience

And sondry werkes bright of excellence

And right so as these philosophers wyte

That heyn is swyft and rounde and eke brennyng

Right so was fayre cecily the whyte

The Nonnes Tale

ful swyft and in euery gode workyng
And rounde and hole in gode perseueryng
And brennyng euiz in charite ful brigghe
Now haue I declared you what she hight

Here endith the Nonnes prologue
And begynneth her tale



His mayden brigghe Cecily as her legend sayth
Was comen of Romaynes and of noble kynde
And from her cradyl by fostryd in the feyth
Of crist and bare his gospel in her mynde
She neuir seced as I wryten fynde
Of her prayer and god to loue and dride
Besekyng him to kepe her maydenhede
And whan this mayde sholde vnto a man
Weddyd be that was ful yong of age
Whiche that y clipped was Valerian

The Nonnes Tale

And day was come of her mariage
She ful deuoute and humble in her corage
Vndre her robe of golde that sat ful seyre
Had next her flesshe y cladde her in an heyre
And while that the orgaynes made melody
To god aboue thus in her herte song she
O lord my body and eke my soule gye
On wemmyd lest I confounded be
And for his loue that dyed vpon the tre
Euery secounde and thridde day she fast
Ay abydyng in her orisons ful fast

The nyght cam and to bedde must she goon
With her husbonde as it was the manere
And pryuely she sayde to him anone
O swete and wel belouyd spouse dere
Ther is a conceple and ye wyl it here
Whiche that right fayne I wolde to you sey
So that ye swere ye wyl nat it be wry

Valerian gan fast to her swere
That for no caas ne thyng that myght be
He sholde neuiz to none be wrethyn her
And than at erst to him sayde she
I haue an aungel whiche that loupth me
That with grete loue wherso I wake or slepe
Is redy ay my body for to kepe

And if that he may fele oute of drede
That ye me touche or loue in bylonye
He right anone wyl see you with the dede
And in poure pouthe thus shal ye dye
And if that ye in clene lyf me gye
He wol you loue as me for youze clennesse
And shewe to you his ioy and his brightnes
This Valerian corrected as god wolde

The Nonnes Tale

aunswerde agayn if I shal truste the
lete me that aungel se and him beholde
And if that it a veriy aungel be
Than wol I do as thou hast prayed me
And if thou loue a nother man for sothe
Right with this swerde than wol I sle you both

Cecily aunswerde anone right in this wyse
If that ye lyst the aungel shal ye se
So that ye trowe on criste and you baptyse
Goth forth to via appia quod she
That from this toun ne stondith but myles thre
And to the poure folkes that there dwell
Sey them as that I shal you telle

Tel them that I Cecily you to them sent
To shewe you gode vrbayn the olde
for secrete nedes and for gode entent
And whan that ye seint vrbayn haue beholde
Telle him the wordes that I to you tolde
And whan that he hath purged you from synne
Than shal ye see the aungel or we twayne

This valerian is in to the place gone
And right as he was taught by her lernynge
He fonde this holy man vrbayn anone
Among the seyntes berielles lowtyng
And he anone withouten taryng
Dyd his messagge and whan that he hadde tolde
Vrbayn for ioye gan his hondes byholde

The teris from his eyen lete he falle
Almyghty god o Jesu crist quod he
Solwer of chaste counceyl hierd of vs alle
The fruyte of that sede of chastite
That thou hast solwe in Cecily take to the
So lyke a besy be withouten gyle

The Nonnes Tale

The scrupth ay thyn owne thralle cecile
For that spouse that she toke but newe
ful lyke a fers spoun she sendith here
As meke as euir was any lambe to ewe
And with that worde anone there gan appere
An olde man y cladde in white clothes clere
That hadde a boke with lettre of gold in honde
And gan bifoze Valerian for to stonde

Valerian as dede fel down for drede
Whan he this olde man sawe stondyng so
Whiche forth with anon he herde him rede,
O lord of alle o feyth o god withouten mo
O cristendome o fadre of alle also
Aboue alle and ouir alle euery where
These wordes al with gold writen were

Whan this was reddde than sayd this olde man
Leuyst thou this thing or no say ye or nay
I leue al thyng quod Valerian
For sother thyng than this I dar wele say
Vndre heuyn no wight thynke may
Tho banysshed this olde man he ne wpst where
And brban him cristned right there

Valerian goth home and fyndeth Cecily
Within his chambre with an aungel stonde
This aungel hadde of roses and of lily
Crowns two the whiche he bare in honde
And first to cecily as I vnderstonde
He gaue that one. and after gan he take
That othez to Valerian hez make

With body cleue and vnwemmyd thought
Kepith ay wele the se crownes quod he
From paradise to you them haue I brought
Ne nenir more shal they rotyn be

The Nonnes Tale

Ne lese theire swete sauoure trustith me
Ne neuiz wight ne shalle se them with eye
But he be chaste and hate belony

And thou Valerian for thou so sone
Assentyd to goddes counceyle also
Say what thou lyst and thou shalt haue thy bone
I haue a brother quod Valerian tho
That in this worlde I loue noman so
I pray you that my brother may haue grace
To knowe the trouthe as I do in this place

The aungel sayde god lyketh thy request
And bothe with the palme of martirdome
ye shal come into this blissful feest
And with that worde Tyburce his brother come
And whan that he the sauoure vndre nom
Whiche that the roses and the lylles cast
Within his hert he gan to wondre fast

And sayd I wondre this tyme of the yere
Whens that this swete sauoure comyth so
Of roses and lylles that I smelle here
For though I hadde them in myn hondes two
The sauoure myght in me no deppez go
The swete smelle that in my herte I fynde
Hath chaunged me al in an other kynde

Valerian sayde two crownes haue we
Snowe white and rose rede that shyneth clere
Whiche that thyn eyen haue no myght to se
And as thou smellyst through my prayer
So shalt thou se them leue brother deere
If it so be thou withouten scowthe
Beleue a right and knowe verry trouthe

Tyburce aunswerde sayst thou this to me
In sotfastnes or in dreame I herkyn this

The Nonnes Tale

In dremps quod Valerian haue we be
Vnto this tyme brother myn p wys
But now at erst oure duellyng in trouthe is
How wotest thou this quod Tiburce & in what wyse
Quod Valerian that shal I the deuyse

The aungel of god hath me the trouthe y taughte
Whiche thou shalt se if thou wylt renye
The ydolles and be cleane and elles naught
And of the myracle of the se crownest wey
Seynt ambrose in his preface lyst for to say
Solempnely this noble doctoure dere
Comendith it and sayth in this manere

The palme of martirdome for to resceyue
Seint cecile fulfilled of goddes yeste
The worlde and eke her chambre gan she weyue
Witnes Cecily and Tiburces shryfte
To whiche god of his bounte wolde shryfte
Crounes two of floures swete smellynge
And made his aungel them the crownes brynge

The mayde hath brought them to the blisse aboue
The worlde hath wylt that it is worthy certayn
Deuocion and chastite wele for to loue
Tho she wode him cecily alle open and pleyne
That al ydolles been but a thyng in bayne
For they be dombe and therto they be deef
And charged him his ydolles for to leef

Who so nat trowith this a beest he is
Quod tho Tiburce if I shalle nat lye
And she gan kysse his brest that herde this
And was ful glade he coude trouthe aspye
This day I take the for myn alye
Sayde this blissyd fayre mayden dere
And after that she sayde as ye may here

The Nonnes Tale

So right so as the loue of crist quod she
made me thy brothers wyf right in this wyse
Anone for myn alpe here take I the
Sithen that thou wylt thyn ydelles dispyse
Go with thy brotkez now and the baptyse
And make the clene so that thou may beholde
That aungelles face whiche thy brotkez of tolde

Tiburce aunswerd and sayd brother dere
first tel me whether I shal and to what man
To whom quod he com forth with right gode chere
I wol the lede vnto the . . . brban

To brban brotkez myn balerian
Quod tho tyburce wylt thou me thy dre lede
me thynketh that it were a wondre drede

Ne mene ye nat brban quod he tho
That is so ofte dampned to be dede
And woneth in halthes alwey to and fro
And dar nat onys put forth his hede
Men sholde him brenne in a fyre so rede
If he were founde if men myght him aspye
And we also to bere him company

And while we seke that dyuinyte
That is hyd in heuyn pryuely
Algate brent in this worlde shal we be
To whom Cecily aunswerde boldly
Men myght drede wele and skilfully
This lyf to lose myn owne dere brotkez
If this were lyrnyng only and none othez

But there is better lyf in othez place
That neuiz shal be lost ne drede the nought
Whiche goddes sonne vs tolde through his grace
That faders sonne hath al thyng wrought
And al that wrought is with a skilful thought

The Nonnes Tale

The goost that from the fadre gan procede
Hath souled him withouten any drede

By worde and by myracle be goddes sonne
Whan he was in the worlde declared here
That there is othez lpf there men may wonne
To whom aunswerd tyburce o sustre dere
Ne saydest thou right now in this manere
Thez nas but one god lord in sothfastnes
And now of thre how mayst thou bere wytnes

That shal I tel quod she oz that I go
Right as a man hath sapiences thre
Memory engyne and intellecte also
So in suche beynge of dyuinyte
Thre persones may there right wele be
Tho gan she there ful besily him preche
Of cristes sonne and of his peynes terte

And many poyntes of his passioun
How goddes sonne in this worlde was withholde
To do mankynde pleyn remission
That been bounde in synnes and cazes colde
Alle these thynges she to tyburce tolde
And after this tyburce in god entent
With valerian to . . . brban went

That thanked god and with glade hert and light
He cristned him and made him in that place
Parfyte in his lernynge goddes knyght
And after this tyburce gat suche grace
That euery day he sawe in tyme and space
The aungel of god and euery maner bone
That he god ashyd it was spedde ful sone

It were ful harde by ordre for to sayn
How many wondres iesus for him wrought
But at the last to telle shorte and playn

The Nonnes Tale

The sergeauntes of the toun them sought
And them bi fore almache the prefecte brought
Whiche them apposed and knewe al theire entent
And to the ymage of Iubitez them sent

And sayd who so wol do no sacrifice
Swappe of his hede this is my sentence here
Anone these martirs that I pou deuyse

Oue maximus that was an officere
Of the prefectes and his counsellere
Them hent and the seyntes forth ladde
Him self he wept for pyte that he hadde

Whan maximus hadde herde the seyntes sore
He gat him of the turmentours leue
And had them to his house withouten more
And with theire prechyng or it was rue
They gan fro the turmentoures for to reue
And from maypme and fro his folke echone
The fals seyth to trow in god allone

Cecily cam whan it was woyte nyght
With prestys that them cristned al in fere
And after ward whan day was woyen light
Cecily sayde them with a ful stede fast there
Now cristes owen knyghtes sleef and dere
Cast al a wey the werkes of derknes
And arme you with the armes of brightnes

Ye haue forsoth done a grette batayle
Your cours is done youre seyth hath you conscrupd
Goth to the croune of lyf that may nat fayle
The right fulle iuge whiche ye haue scrupd
Shal yue it you as ye haue it descrupd
And whan this thyng was sayde as I deuyse
Men ledde them forth to do sacrifice

But whan they were to the place y brought

The Nonnes Tale

To telle shortly the conclusioun
They nolde encence ne sacrifice right naught
But on theire knees spitten them adoun
With humble herte and sadde deuotioun
And losen bothe theire hedes in the place
The 2 soules went to the kyng of grace

This maximus that sawe this thyng betyde
With pytons teris tolde it anone right
That he the 2 soules sawe to heuyn glyde
With aungels ful of clernes and light
And with his worde conuertyd many a wight
For whiche almachius dyd him so to bete
With whippes of lede tyl he his lyp gan sete

Cecily him toke and buried him anone
By tyburce and valerian sothly
Within her buryng place bndre the stone
And after this almachius hastely
Badde his mynistres fetchen openly
Cecily so that she myght in his presence
Do sacrifice and iubi- tence

But they conuertyd at her wyse loze
Wepte ful soze and gaue ful credence
Vnto her worde and cryde more and more
Crist goddes sonne whiche withoute difference
Is very god this is oure sentence
That hath a seruaunt so gode him to serue
This with o boyce we crye though we sterue

Almachius that herde of this doyng
Bad fetchen Cecily that he myght her se
And alder first this was his askyng
What maner woman art thou quod he
I am a gentyl woman born quod she
I aske it the quod he though it the greue

The Nonnes Tale

Of thy religioun and of thy beleue

Why than began ye poure questioun folow
Quod she that wolde two aunsweres concluden
In one demaunde ye ashydle wolden
Almache aunswerde to that similitude

Of whens comyth thy aunswere so rude

Of whens quod she. Whan that she was freyned

Of conscience and of gode feyth vnseyned

Almachius sayde takest thou none hede

Of my powez and she aunswerd him thys

poure myght quod she is ful lytel to drede

for every mortalle manmys powez nys

But lyke a bladder ful of wynde y wys

for with a nedelles poynte whan it is blowe

may alle the bost of it be leyde ful lowe

ful wrongfully began thou quod he

And in wrong is yet al thy perseueraunce

wotest thou nat how oure prynces myghty and fre

haue thus comaunded and made ordenaunce

That every cristen wight shal haue penaunce

But if that he his cristendome withsay

and goon al quyte if he wyl it reney

poure princes erzen as poure nobley doth

Quod tho cecile in a wode sentence

ye make us gyltye and it is nat sothe

for ye that knowe wele oure innocence

for asmoche as we do ay reuerence

To criste and for we bere a cristen name

ye put on us a cryme and eke a blame

But we that knowe that name so

for vertuous we may it nat withsaye

Almache aunswerde these one of these two

Do sacrifice or cristendome reney

The Nonnes Tale

That thou may schape by that weye
At whiche worde this holy blisful mayde
Can for to laughe and to the iuge sayde

O iuge confused in thy nycte
Wolt thou that I resceyue innocence
To make me a wyched wight quod she
Lo he dissimyleth here in audience
He starith and wodith in his aduertence
To whom almache sayd o sely wretche
Ne wotest thou nat how fer my wytte may stretch

Haue nat oure myghty prynces peny
To me both powez and auctorite
To make folke bothe to dye and lyuen
Why spekyt thou than so proudely to me
I speke naught but stedfastly quod she
Nat proudely for I say for my syde
We hate dedely that vyce of pryde

And if thou drede nat a soth for to here
Than wyl I she we al openly by right
Thou that hast made a ful grette lesyng here
Thou sayst thy prynces haue peny the myght
Bothe for to sle and for to quychen a wight
That thou mayst only but lyf bereue
Thou hast none othez powez ne no leue

But thou mayst say thy prynces haue the makid
Mynistre of deth for if thou speke of mo
Thou liest for thy powere is ful nakyd
Do wey thy boldnesse sayd almache tho
And do sacrifice to oure goddes oz thou go
I reche nat what wrong thou me profer
For I can suffre as can a philosophe

But that wronges may I nat endure
That thou spekyt of oure goddes here quod he

The Nonnes Tale

O Cecily aunswere o nyce creature
Thou saydest no worde sithen thou spakest to me
That I ne knowe therwith thy nyce
And that thou were in euery maner wyse
A lewde officer and a lewde iustise

There lacketh no thyng of thy better eyen
But thou art blynde for thyng that we se al
That is a stone that men may wele aspyen
That if he stone a god thou wylt it calle
I rede the let thy honde vpon it falle
And taste it wele and stone thou shalt it spynde
Sithen that thou seest nat with thy eyen blynde

It is a shame that the people shalle
So scorne the and laughe at thy foly
For comonly men wote it wele ouir alle
That myghty god is in heuynnes hye
And these ymages wele thou mayst aspye
To the ne to them self may do no profette
For in effecte they be nat worthe a myte

This and suche othez wordes sayde she
And he woyte wrothe and bad men sholde her lede
Home vnto her house and in her house quod he
Brenne her in a bathe of flamys rede
And as he hadde right was it do in dede
For in a bathe they gan her fast shyppen
And nyght and day fyre they vndre betyn

The long nyght and eke the day also
For al the fyre and eke the grete hete
She sat al colde and felt no maner wo
It made her nat a droppe for to swete
But in that bathe her lyf she motlete
For almachius with a ful wyched entent
To sle her in bathe his sonde to her sent

The Nonnes Tale

Thre strokes in the necke he smote her tho
The turmentoure but for no maner chaunce
He myght nat smyte her necke a t wo
And for ther was that tyme an ordenaunce
That noman sholde do no persone suche penaunce
The fourth stroke to smyte soft or soze
This turmentoure ne durst do no more

But half dede With her necke corruen there
He left her lye and on his wey he went
The cristen folke whiche that aboute her were
With shetes haue the blode bp hent
Thre daies lpyed she thus in this turment
And neuir cesed them the seyth to teche
That she had fostryd them she gan to preche

And them she paue her menables and her thyng
And to gode vrbayn be toke them tho
And sayde I asked this of heuyn kyng
To haue respite thre daies and no mo
To recomende to you or that I go
These soules lo and that I may do wirche
Here of my house perpetually a chirche

Seint vrbayn With his dehyngs pryuelv
The body fet and buried it by nyght
Among his othez seyntes honestly
Her house the chirche of seynt cecily hight
Saynt vrbayn halowed it as he wele myght
In whiche vnto this day in noble wyse
Men do to criste and to his seyntes seruise

Here endith the Nonnes tale
And here begynneth the prologue
Of the chanons yeman

The Nonnes Tale

Whan tolde was the lyf of seint Cecile
Wher we hadde ryden fully fyue myle
at bough-ton vndre ble be gan a take
A man that clothed was in clothes blake
And vndrenethe he ware a white surplice
His hahney whiche was of pomelgryce
So swette he that wondre was to se
It semyd that he hadde pryched myles thre
aboute the patrel stode the some ful hpe
He was of some as flyched as a ppe
The hahney eke that his yeman rode spon
So swette that vnnethes myght it goon
A male tby folde spon his croppyn lay
It semyd that he carped lytel arzap
Alight for some rode this worthy man
And in myn herte to wondre I began
What that he was tyl that I vndrestode
How that his cloke was sowd to his hode
for whiche whan I hadde long auysed me
I demyd him som chanon for to be
His hatte hyng at his bahe down by a lace
for he hadde ryden more than trotte or pace
He rode ap prychyng as he were wode
A clothe leef he hadde leyde vndre his hode
for swete and for to kepe his hede fro hete
But it was ioye for to se him swete
His forehede droppyd as a styliatorp
were ful of planteyn or of peritorp
And whan he was come he gan cpe
God saue quod he this ioly company
fast hane I pryched quod he for youre sake
Bicause that I wolde you ouir take
To ryde in this mery company

The prologue of the chanoins yeman

His yeman was eke ful of curtesye
And sayde sires now in the morowe tyde
Dute of youre hostrepe I saue you ryde
And warned here my lord and souerayn
Whiche that to ryde with you is ful fayn
For his disporte he loueth daliaunce
Freend for thy warnyng god gyue the gode chaunce
Than saydeoure hoost certayn it wolde seme
Thy lord were wyse and so I may wele deme
He is ful iocunde also dar I ley
Can he ought telle a mery tale or twey
With whiche he glade may this company
Who sir my lord, ye sir withouten lye
He can of myrthe and eke of iolite
Nat but ynow also sir trustith me
And ye him knewe as wele as do I
Ye wolde wondre how wele and craftely
He coude werke and that in sondry wyse
He hath taken on him many a grette empryse
Whiche were ful hard for any that is here
To bryng aboute but they of him it lere
As homely as he rydeth amonges you
If ye him knewe it wolde be for youre prow
Ye wolde nat forgoon his acqweyntaunce
For mekyl good I dar ley in balaunce
Al that I haue in my possessioun
He is a man of higg discrecioun
I warne you he is a passyng wyse man
Wele quodoure hoost I pray the telle me than
Is he a clerke or none tel me what he is
A clerke nay he is greter than a clerke y wys
Sayd this yeman and in wordes fewe
Hoost and of his craft somwhat wol I shewe

The prologue of the channons yeman

Sir my lord can suche a subtelte
But alle his crafte yeman nat wytte of me
for al the grounde to caunterbury town
He coude alle clene turne by so down
And paue it ²² With siluer and With golde
And whan this yeman hath thus tolde
Unto oure hoost. he sayde benedicite
This thing is wondre merueylous to me
Sithen that thy lord is of so high prudence
Bicause of whiche sholde men him reuerence
That of his worshippe rekyth he so lyte
His ouerest stoppe is nat worth a myte
As in effecte to him so moot I goo
It is alle haudy and to toze also
Why is thy lord so stotyshe I the pray
And of power is better clothe to be
If that his dede accorde With his speche
Tel me that and that I the beseeche
Why quod this yeman wherto aske ye me.
God helpe me so for he shal neuiz the
But I wyl now anowe that I say
And therfore kepe it secrete I you prey
He is to wyse in feyth as I beleue
That is ouir do it wol neuiz preue
And right as clerkes say it is a byce
Wherfore in that I holde him lewde and nyce
for whan a man hath ouir grete a wytte
ful oft it happith him to mysse it
So do my lord and that me greuyth sore
God it amende I can say nomore
Therof no force gode yeman quod oure hoost
Sithen of the connyng of thy lord thou boost
Tel how he doth tel on now hardely

The prologge of the canons yeman

Sithen that he is so crafty and so stye
Where duelle ye if it to telle be
In the subarbes of a town quod he
Lurhyng in hernys and in lanys blynde
Where as these robbers and these theuys be blynde
Holden theire ferdful pryue residence
As they that dar nat shewe theire presence
So fare we if we shal say the sothe
Now quod oure hoost let me talke tothe
Why art thou so descoloured in thy face
Pettyr quod he god peupth harde grace
I am so bled the hote fyre to blowe
That it hath chaunged my coloure I trowe
I am nat wont in no myrroure to pryue
But swynke soze and lerne to multiplie
We blundryn euir and pouryn in the fyre
And for alle that we sayle of oure desize
For euir we lacke oure conclusioun
To moche folke we do illusioun
And borowe golde be it a pounde or two
Or ten or twelue or many sommes mo
And make them wene at the lest wey
That of a pounde we coude make tway
It is false and ay we haue gode hope
It for to do and after it we grope
But that science is so fer as biforn
We may nat al though we hadde it sworn
It ouir take it flytte a wey so fast
It wol us make beggars at the last
Whyle this yeman was thus in talkyng
This chanon drewe him nere and herde al thyng
Whiche this yeman spake for suspensioun
Of mennys speche euir hadde this chanon

The prologue of the channons yeman

For caton sayth he that gyfte is
Demyth al thyng to be spoke of him y wys
That was the cause he gan so nygh drawe
To this yeman to herhyr alle his sawe
And thus he sayde to his yeman tho
Holde thou thy peas and speke no mo
For if thou do thou shalt it dere aby
Thou sclaundrest me here in this company
And eke discoueryst that thou sholdest hyde
ye quod oure hoost tel on what so betyde
Of alle this thretynge reche thou nat a myte
In feyth quod he no more I do but lyte
And whan this chanon sawe it wolde nat be
But that this yeman wolde telle his pryncipe
He fledde a wey for berz sorowe and shame
A ha quod the yeman here shal ryse a game
Al that I can anon I wol you tel
Sithen he is goon the foule fende him quelle
For neuir herafter wol I with him mete
For peny ne for ponde I you behete
He that me first brought to that game
Or that he dye sorowe haue he and shame
For it is earnest to me by my feyth
That fele I wele what that any man sayth
And yet for alle my smert and alle my greef
For al my sorowe laboure and myscheef
I coude neuir leue it in no wyse
Now wold to god my wytte myght suffise
To telle alle that longith to that arte
But natheles you wol I tel a parte
Sithen that my lord is goon I wol nat spare
Suche thyng as I knowe I wol declare

*John
Thomas
My fellow
John
Thomas
John
John*

The tale of the chanons yeman

Here endith the prologue of
the Chanons yeman
And begynneth his tale



W Yet this chanon I duelled seyn yere
And of his science am neuir the nere
Al that I hadde I haue lost therby
And god wote so haue mo than I
Of clothynge and of othez gode aray
There as I was wonte to be right freshe and gay
Now may I were an hose spon myn hede
And where my coloure was bothe white and rede
Now it is wan and of a ledyn he we
Who so it vsyth soze shal he rewe
And of my swynke y blent is myn eye
So suche auauntage it is to multiplie
That stydynge science hath made me so bare
That I haue no gode where that euir I fare

The tale of the canons yeman

And yet I am endettyd so sore therby
Of golde that I borowed truly
That whyle I lyue I shal it quyte neuir
Let euery man be ware by me for euir
What maner man that castith him therto
If he contynue I holde his thyrste y do
For helpe me god therby shal he nat wyne
But enpeyre his purse and make his wytte thynne
And whan he through his madnes and his folp
Hath lost his owne gode through iepardy
Than he exciteth othez men therto
To lese theire gode as he him self hath do
For into wretches iope it is and ease
To haue theire felowes in peyne and disease
For thus was I onys lernyd of a clerke
Of that no charge I wol speke of oure werke
Whan we be there as we shal excersise
Dure elyssh craft we seme wondre wyse
Dure termys been so clergypalle and so queynte
I blowe the fyre tyl my herte feynte
What sholde I telte eche propozcion
Of thynges whiche we worke bypon
As on fyre oz sey vnces may wele be
Of syluer oz some othez quantite
And besy me to telle you the names
Of orpement Brent bones iron squames
That into powder grounde be ful smalle
And in an erthen pottle how put is alle
And salt petyr and also papyre
Bifore these powders that I speke of here
And wele y couered with a lampe of glas
And of moche othez thyng whiche that there was
And of the pottys and glasses enlutyng

The tale of the chanoys yeman

That of the eyre myght passe oute notyng
And of the fyre easy and smert also
Whiche that was made and of the care and wo
That we hadde in oure maters sublymynge
And in amalgamyng and calceynge
Of quyespluez cleped mercury crude
For alle oure slighthes we can nat conclud
Oure orpement and sublymed mercury
Oure grounden litarge eke on the persury
Of eche of thaim of vnces a certayn
Nat helpith vs oure labour is in beyng
And eke oure spirites ascencioun
Ne oure maters that lye al fye a down
May in oure workyng no thyng auayle
For lost is alle oure labour and trauayse
And alle the coost a twenty deuyse wey
Is lost also whiche we on it ley
For ther is also ful many a nother thyng
That is to oure crafte apperteynyng
Though I by ordre them reherse nekan
Bicause that I am a lewde man
yet wol I tel them as they come to mynde
Though I ne can nat sette them in theire hynde
As boole armonyache beerdegrece bozars
And sondry vesselles made of erthe and glas
Oure bynnales and oure descensories
Violes crossolettes and sublymatories
Conturbitees and alembykes eke
And othez suche dere ynough a lech
Nat nedith it to reherse them alle
Waters rubifyng and boles galle
Arsenph sal armonyake and brymstone
And herbes eke coude I telle many one

The tale of the channons yeman

As egypmonyne balerian and lunary
And othez suche if that me lyst to tary
Dure lampes brynne nyght and day
To brynge aboute oure craft if that we may
Dure furnes eke of calcinacioun
And of waters albisfacion
Unslepyd lyme chalke gleyre of an eye
Poudres dyuerse asshes dong pyssle and clepe
Seryd pottes salt petry byttriote
And dyuers fyres made of wode and cose
Sal tartry alcoly and sal preparate
And combuste maters and coagulate
Cley made with horse dong mannys here and oyle
Of tartre alym glas berme worke and arguse
Rosaltaz and othez maters enbisyng
And eke of oure maters encorpozynge
And of oure syluer citrynacioun
Dure sementynge and oure fermentacioun
Dure ingottes testes and many moo
I wol you telle as me was taughte also
The foure spirites and the bodies seyn
By ordre as I herd my lord neyn
The first spirite quychesiluer clepyd is
The secounde orpement the thridde pyrys
Sal armonpache and the fourth brymstone
The bodies seyn loke them there anon
Sol golde is and luna syluer we threpe
Mars iron Mercury quychesiluer we clepe
Saturnus lede and iubitex is tyn
And Venus copez by my fader kynne
This cursed craft who wol exercise
He shalle no gode haue that may suffice
For alle gode he spende theire aboute

The tale of the chanoys yeman

Be lese shal therof haue I no doute
Who so that lystith vnter his folp
Let him come forth and lerne to multiply
And euery man that hath ought in his cofre
Let him appere and weye a philosophes
Prest or chanoyn or any othez wight
Though he sytte at his boke day and nyght
Inlernyng of this elyssh nyce lore
Alle is in beyn and parde moche more
Is to lerne a lewde man this subtelte
If speke nat therof it wol nat be
And can he lettrature or can he none
As in effecte he shal fynde it al one
For bothe two by my saluacioun
Concluden in multiplicacioun
Alliche wele whan they haue alle y doo
This is to sayn they sayle bothe two
yet forgate I to make rehersayle
Of watres cozosp and of tymap
And of bodys molificacioun
And also of theire enduracioun
Dyles ablacions metalle fusible
To telle you it wolde passe any byble
That owhe is therfore as for the best
Of these names now wol I me rest
For as I trowe I haue tolde y now
To repse a feende al loke he neuir so row
A nay let be the philosophers stoon
Ellyer we clepe we seke fast echoon
For hadde we him than were we siher y now
But vnto god of heuyn I make anowe
For alle oure craft whan we haue alle y do
And alle oure steyghte he wol nat come vs to

The tale of the channons yeman

He hath made vs spende moche gode
for sorow the of almoost we wepen wode
But that gode hope crepith in oure herte
Supposyng euir though we soze smert
To be releuyd by him afterwarde
Suche supposyng and hope is sharpe and harde
I warne you wele it is to sekyn euir
That future temps hath made men disseuiz
In truste therof alle that euir they hadde
pet of that arte they can nat wey sad
for vnto them it is a bytter swete
So semyth it for ne had they but a shete
Whiche that myght wrappe them in a nyght
And a bratte to walken in by day lyght
They wolde it selle and spende it in this crafte
They can nat stynt tyl no thyng be last
And euir more where that they goon
Men may them kenne by smelle of brymston
for al the worlde they stynte as a gote
Theire sauoure is so rammyshe and so hote
That though a man a myle from them be
The sauoure wyl enfecte him trustith me
So thus by smellyng and thredebare aray
If that men lyst these folke knowe they may
And if a man wol aske them pryuelly
Why they be clothed so vnthristely
Right anone they wol ronne in his ere
And say if that they aspyed were
Men wolde them see bicause of theire science
So thus these folke betrayen innocence
Was ouir this I my tale vnto
Or that the pottle be on the fyre y do
And metalles a certayn quantite

The tale of the chanoys yeman

My lordes them temprith and no man but he
Now is he goon I dar say boldly
For as men say he can do craftely
Algate I wote wele he hath suche a name
And yet ful ofte he tynneth in the blame
And wote ye how ful ofte it farith so
The pot to brekith and fare wele al is do
The metalles been of so grete spolence
Dure walles may nat make them resistance
But if they were wrought of tyme and stone
They perse so and through the walke they gone
And som of them synke down in the grounde
Thus haue we lost by tyme many a pounde
And som ar scatred al the floore aboute
Some lepyth in the roof withouten doute
Though that the feende in oure sight him nat shewe
I trow that he with vs be that is the shewe
In helle where he is lord and spre
Ne is ther more wo ne rancor ne pre
Whan that oure pote is broken as I haue sayd
Euery man chyt and holdith him euyl appayd
Some sayde it was of the fyre makynge
Some sayd nay it was of the blowynge
Than was I aferde for that was myn office
Stra we quod the thridde ye be lewde and nyce
It was nat tempryd as it ought to be
Nay quod the fourthe stynte and herthyn me
Bicause oure fyre was nat made of beche
That is the cause and other none si theche
I can nat telle where on it was along
But wele I wote grete stryf is vs a mony
What quod my lordes ther is no more to doon
Of these parzelles I wol be ware effone

The tale of the chanoys yeman

I am right syher that the potte was crased
Be as be may be ye nat amasped
As vsage is let swepe the floze swythe
Plucke by youre hertes and be glade and blythe
The mulloke on an hepe swepyd was
And on the flooze cast a canuas
And alle the mulloke in a spyde y throwe
And siftyd and pyched many a throwe
Parde quod one somwhat of our metalle
yet is ther here though we haue nat alle
And though this thyng myshapped hath as now
Another tyme it may be wele ynow
We must put oure gode in auenture
A marchaunt parde may nat ay endure
Trustith me wele in his prosperite
Somytyme his godes been drenchyd in the see
And somtyme it comyth sauf vnto londe
Peas quod my lorde the nexte tyme I wol fonde
To bryng oure crafte al in an othez plyte
And but I do sires lete me haue the wyte
Ther was a defaute in somwhat wele I wote
Another sayde the fyre was ouir hote
But be it hote or colde I dar say this
That we conclude euir more amys
We sayle al wey of that we wolde haue
And in oure madnes euir more we raue
And whan we be to gydder euerichone
Euery man semyth as wyse as salamon
But alle thyng whiche that shyneth as golde
It is nat golde as I haue herde tolde
Ne euery appyl that is fayre at eye
Nys nat gode what so we clappe or crye
Right so it farith amonges vs

The tale of the chanons yeman

He that semyth wysest by swete Iesus
Is moost foole whan it comyth to the preef
And he that semyth trewest is a theef
That shal ye knowe or that I from you wende
Be that my tale be tolde bnto an ende
There was a chanon of religion
Amonges vs wolde infecte al a toun
Though it were as grete as was ny nyue
Rome Alisaundre trope or other thre
His slighes and his insynpte falsenesse
Ne coude noman write as I gesse
Though that he myght lye a thousand pere
In alle the worlde of falsnesse nys his pere
For in his termys he wyl him so wynde
And speke his wordes in so stighly hynde
Whan he comen shal with ony wight
That he wol make him dote anon right
But it a feende be as him self is
ful many a man hath he begyled or this
And wol if that helpe may a while
And yet men ryde or go many a myle
Him for to seke and haue his acqeyntance
Nat knowyng of his fals gouernaunce
And if ye lyst to geue me audience
I wol it tel here in youre presence
But worshipful chanons religious
Ne demeth nat that I schauendre youre house
Al though my tale of a chanon be
Of euery ordre som shewe is parde
As god forbode that al a company
Shulde rewe a synnguler manns foly
To schauendre you it is no thyng myn entent
But to correcte that is mys went

The tale of the chynons yeman

This tale was nat only tolde for you
But eke for other mo ye wote wele how
That amonges cristes apostelles & welue
There nas no traytoure but iudas him selue
Than why sholde we remenaunt haue a blame
That gyltes were by you I say the same
Saue only this if ye wol herhyn me
If any iudas in youre couent be
Remeuyth him betymes I you rede
If shame or losse may cause any drede
And be nothyng displeased I you pray
But in this caas herhyn what I say

i In london was a preest Annuelere

That therin hadde duelt many a yere
Whiche was so pleisant and so seruyfable
Vnto the wyf where as he went to table
That she wolde suffre him no thyng to pay
For borde ne clothynge went he neuir so gay
And spendynge syluer hadde he right pnowe
Therof no force in pleisaunce went his plowe
But for to telle you forth of this chynon
That brought this preest to confusion
This fals chynon cam vpon a day
Vnto the preestes chambre where he lay
Besechynge him to lene him a certayn
Of golde and he wolde quyte him agayn
Lene me a marke quod he but daies thre
At my day I wol sauns fayle quyte it the
And if so be thou fynde me than fals
Another day hang me by the hals
This preest him toke a marke and that as wythe
And this chynon him thanked of sythe
And toke his lene and went forth his wey

The tale of the chanoys yeman

And at the thridde day broughte his money
And to this preest he toke his golde agayn
Wherof this preest was wondre glade and fayne
Certis quod he no thyng annopeth me
Tolene a man a noble two or thre
Or what thyng were in my possession
Whan he is so true of condicioun
That in no wyse breke he wol his day
To suche a man I can nat say nay
What quod this chanon sholde I be vntrue
Nay that were a thyng fallen of ne we
Trouthe is a thyng that I wol euir kepe
Vnto that day in whiche I shal crepe
Vnto my graue or elles cristе forbede
Beleuyth this as spheer as the crede
God I thanke and in gode tyme he it sayde
That ther nas neuir man yet euyl payde
For golde ne siluer that he me lent
Ne neuir falshe in myn herte I ment
And sir quod he now of my pruyte
Sithen ye so godelicke haue been to me
And kyndith to me so grete gentylnesse
Somwhat to quyte with youre kyndnesse
I wol you shewe if that ye lyst here
I wol you teche plener the matere
How I can worke in philosophye
Take gode hede ye shal wele se at eye
That I wol a maystrye do or I go
Ye sir quod the preest and wyl ye so
Marry therof I pray you hartely
At youre comaundment sir truly
Quod the chanon and elles cristе forbede
To how this theef coude his seruice bedede

The tale of the chanons yeman

ful soth it is that suche profered seruise
Stynketh as wytnessith the olde wyse
And that right sone I wol it verify
In this chanon rotte of alle trechery
That euirmore delite hath and gladnesse
Suche feendly thoughtes in his herte impresse
How cristes people he may to my chief bryng
God hepe vs from his false dysmytynge
Nought wylt this preest with whom that he delte
Ne of his harme comynge no thyng he felte
O sely preest o sely innocente
With couetyse anone thou shalt be blent
O graceles ful blynde is thy concepte
No thyng art thou ware of his dyscepte
Whiche that this foy shapen hath to the
His wyles his wrenches thou mayst nat see
Wherfore to go to the conclusioun
That referyth to thy confusioun
Unhappy man anon I wol me hys
To telle thy vnwytt and thy foly
And eke the falsenesse of that othe wretch
As ferforth as my comynge wyl stretch
This chanon was my lord ye wol wene
Sir hoost in feyth and by heuens quene
It was a nother chanon and nat he
That can an hundred folde more subtelte
He hath betrayed folke many a tyme
Of his falsenesse it dullith me to ryme
Eir whan I speke of his falschede
For shame of him my chekes wexen rede
Agates they begynne for to glowe
For redenesse haue I none right wele I knowe
In my bysage for fumes dyuerse

The tale of the chanoys yeman

Of metallē whiche ye haue herde me reherce
Consumed and wastyd hath my redenesse
Now takith hede of this chanoys cursidnesse
Sir quod he to the preest let your man gone
For quysilver that we hadde it anone
And let him bryng vnces two or thre
And whan he comyth as fast ye shal se
A wondre thyng whiche ye sawe neuir or this
Sir quod the preest it shal be do p wps
He hadde his seruaunt fetchē him this thyng
And he al redy was at his byddyng
And went him forth and cam anone agayn
With this quysilver shortly for to seyn
And toke the vnces thre to the chanon
And he them leyde wele and fayre adoun
And hadde the seruaunt coles for to bryng
That he anon myght go to his workyng
The coles right anon were y fette
And this chanon toke oute a crosselet
Of his bosom and shewde it to the preest
This instrument quod he whiche that thou seest
Take in thy honde and put thy self therin
Of this quysilver an vnce and betwynne
In the name of crist to wey a philosopher
Ther be ful fewe whiche I wolde it profez
To shewe them thus moche of my science
For here shal ye se by experience
That this quysilver I wol mortify
Right in youre sight anon withouten lye
And make it as gode syluer and as fyne
As there is any in youre purse or myn
Or elleswhere and make it malliable
And elles holde me fals and unstable

The tale of the chanons yeman

amonges folke for euir to appere
I haue a poudre that cost me dere
Shal make al gode for it is cause of alle
my connyng whiche I you shewe shal
Dopdeth poure man and let him be withoute
and shytte the doze whyle we be there aboute
Dure prpuete that noman bs aspye
whiles that we worke in this philosophy
al as he hadde fulfpled was in dede
This ilke seruaunt anon oute yede
And his mayster shytte the doze anon
And to theire laboure spedely they goon
This preest at this cursed chanons byddyng
Upon the fyre right anon set this thyng
And blew the fyre and besped him fulle faste
And this chanon into the crosselet cast
A poudre nat I neuiz wherof it was
y made of chalke of erthe oz of glas
Or som what elles was nat worth a fye
To blynde with this preest and hadde him hye
The coles for to couche alle aboue
for in tokenyng that I the loue
Quod this chanon. thyh hondes two
Shal werke al thyng that here shalbe do
Gramercy quod this preest and was right glade
And couched the coles as the chanon hade
And while he besp was. this feendly wretche
This false chanon the foule feende him fetch
Dute of his bosom toke a bechyn cole
In whiche ful subtelly was made an hole
And therin was put of spluez lympayle
An vnse and stoppyd was withouten fayle
The hole with wey to hepe the lymayle in

The tale of the chanoys yeman

And vnderstondeþ that this false gynn
Was nat made there but it was made befoze
And othez thynges that I pou telle ſhal more
Hereafter whiche he with him brought
Wz he cam there him to begyle he thought
And ſo he dyd oz that they pede at Wynnne
Tyl he hadde ternyd him he coude nat tWynnne
It dullyþ me whan that I of him ſpeke
Of his falſchede ſayn wolde I me wryte
Yf I wyſt how but he is here and there
He is ſo variaunt he abydeþ no where
But takith hede ſires for goddes loue
He toke his cole of whiche I ſpake aboue
And in his honde he bare it pryncely
And whyles this preest couched beſylly
The coles as I pou tolde oz this
This chanon ſayd frende ye doo amys
This is nat couchyd as it ought to be
But ſone I ſhalle amende it quod he
Now let me medle therwith but a while
For I haue of pou pyte by ſeint gyle
Ye be right hote I ſe how ye ſwete
Haue here a clothe and wype a wey the wete
And whyles the preest wypped his face
This chanon toke his cole with ſoþy grace
And leyde it aboue ſpon the mydwarde
Wf the croſſelet and blewe wele after ward
Tyl that the coles gan faſt to brenne
Now yeue vs drynke quod the chanon thenne
As ſwythe al ſhal be wele I vnder take
Syt we down and let vs mery make
And whan this chanon his bechyn cole
Hadde broughte and the ſymayle oute of the hole

The tale of the chanoys yeman

Into the crosselet it fpl anon down.
And so it must nedes by reason
Sithen it so eupn aboue couched was
But therof Wpst the preest nothyng alas
He dempd alle the coles lpyche gode
for of the sight he nothyng vnderstode
And whan this althampstre sa we his tyme
Kpse by sir preest he sayde and stond by me
And for I wote wile ingot haue ye none
Go walneth forth and bryngeth a chalk stone
for I wol make of it the same shappe
That an ingot is if it may happe
And bryngge eke with you a bolle or a pan
ful of water and ye shalte wile se thanne
How that oure besynesse shal thyrue and preue
And for ye shal haue me inno mysbeleue
Ne wrong concept of me in poure absence
I wol nat be oute of pouz presence
But go with you and come with you agayn
The chambre dore shortly for to seyn
They opened and shytted and went theire wey
And forth with them they toke the key
And cam apen withoute any delay
What shold I tary alle the long day
He toke the chalke and shope it in a wylse
Of an ingotte as I shal you deuyse
I say he toke oute of his owne stene
A teph of siluer eupl mot he cheue
Whiche that ne was but an vnce of wyght
And takith hede now of this cursed sight
He soope his ingot in length and in brede
Of this teph withouten any drede
So slightly that the preest it nat aspyed

The tale of the chanoys yeman

And in his steue agayn he gan it hyde
And from the fyre he toke vp the matere
And in the ingot he put it with mery chere
And into the water vessel he it cast
Whan that him self and had the preest as fast
Toke what there is put in thy honde and grope
Thou shalt fynde there syluer as I hope
What deup of helle sholde it els be
Shauing of siuer syluer is sir parde
He put his honde in and toke vp a teryn
Of syluer fyne and glade in eury beyne
By the was this preest whan he sawe it was so
Goddes blyssyng and his moders also
And alle halowes haue ye sir chanon
Sayde this preest and I her malisoun
But and ye bouche sauf to teche it me
This noble crafte and this subtelte
I wol be youre man in alle that euer I may
Quod this chanon yet wol I make assay
The secounde tyme that ye may take hede
And be expertee in this at youre nede
Another day assay in myn absence
This disciplyne and this crafty science
Let take another vnce quod he tho
Of quysyluer withoute wordes mo
And do ther with as ye haue do or this
With that othe whiche that now syluer is
The preest him bespeth al that euer he can
To do as this chanon this cursed man
Comaunded him and fast blewe the fyre
For to come to the effecte of his desyre
And this chanon right in this meane whyle
Al redy was the preest for to begyle

The tale of the chanoys pema

and for countenaunce in his honde bare
An holowe styche take kepe and be ware
In the ende of whiche an vnce and moze
Of syluer lymayle put as sayde is bifore
Was in his cole and stoppyd with wey wele
for to kepe in his lymayle euery dele
And whiche the preest was in his besynesse
This chanon with his styche gan it dresse
To him anon and his poudre caste in
As he dyderst. the deupl oute of his shyn
Him turne I pray to god for his falsehede
for he was euir false in thoughte and dede
And with his styche aboue his crosselet
That was ordeyned with that false get
He steryd the coles tyl al relente beganne
The wey apenst the fyre as euery man
But it a fool he wote wele it must nede
And alle that in the styche was oute yede
And in the crosselet hastely fel
Now gode sires what wol ye bet than wel
Whan that this preest was thus begyled agayn
Supposyng nought but trouthe soth to sayn
He was so glade I can nat expresse
In no maner his myrthe and his gladnesse
And to the chanon he profred estsone
Body and gode. ye quod the chanon anon
Though I be poure crafty thou shalt me fynde
I warne the wele yet is ther moze behynde
Is there any copez herin quod he
ye quod the preest siz I trowe ther be
Elles go bye be som and that as swythe
Now gode siz go forth thy wey and hythe
He went his wey and with his coppr cam

The tale of the chanoys yeman

And the chanon in his honde it nam
And of that copre he weyd oute an vnce
Alle to symple is my tonge to pronounce
As to mynistre of my wytte the doublenesse
Of this chanon rote of alle cursydnesse
He semyd frendly to them that knewe him nought
But he was feendly bothe in herte and thought
It werpeth me to telle of his falsenesse
And natheles yet wol I it expresse
To that entent that men may be ware therby
And for none other cause trusy
He put this vnce of copers in his crosselet
And on the fyre as swythe he it set
And cast in poudre and made the preest to blowe
And in his workyng for to stoupe lowe
As he dydere and al was but a iape
Right as him lyst the preest he made his ape
And after in the ingot he it cast
And in the panne put it at the last
Of water and in he put his owne hande
And in his sleue as ye bifore hande
Herd me tel and he hadde of siluer a taryn
He sleightly toke it oute this cursed heyn
On wetynge of the preest of this false crafte
And in the pannes botom he it laft
And in the water rombleth to and fro
And wondre pryuelly he toke hy also
The coper teryn nat knowyng the preest
And hyd it and him hent by the brest
And to him spake and thus he sayd in game
Stoupeth adoun by god ye be to blame
Helpe me now as I dyd you while ere
Put in youre hond and lokeith what is there

The tale of the chanons yeman

This preest toke by this siluer tyn anoon
And than sayd the chanon let vs goon
With these thre tynes whiche that we haue wrought
To som goldsmith to loke if they be ought
For by my feyth I nolde for myn hode
But if they were syluer fyne and good
And that as swythe preyd it shalbe
Vnto the goldsmith with these tynes thre
They went and put these tynes in assay
To fyre and hamez myght no man say nay
But that they were as them ought to be
This sottyd preest who was gladder than he
Was neuiz byrde gladder agenst the day
Ne nyghtyngale in the season of may
Was neuiz noon that best lyst to syng
Ne lady lusty in carolpyng
Or for to speke of loue or womanhede
Ne knyght in armes to done any hardy dede
To stonde in grace of his lady dere
Than hadde this preest this sovy craft to lere
And to the chanon thus spake he and seyde
That for the loue of god that for vs al deyde
And as I may deserue it vnto you
What shal this receyte coste tel me now
By oure lady quod this chanon it is dere
I warne you wele that saue I and a freze
In Englonde can no man it make
No force quod he now sir for goddes sake
What shal I pay telle me I you pray
Swys quod he it is ful dere I say
Sir at one worde if ye lyst it to haue
Ye shalle pay fourty pounde so god me saue
And nere the frendship that ye dyd or this

The tale of the chanoins yeman

To me sholde ye pape nomore pwpys
This preest the summe of fourty pounde anon
Of nobles fet and toke them euerythoon
To this chanon for his ilke recepte
Alle his workyng was but fraude and discepte
Sir preest he sayd I kepe to haue no losse
Of my crafte for I wol kepe it close
And as ye loue me kepe ye it secre
For if men knowe alle my subtelte
By god they wolde haue so grete enuye
To me bicause of my philosophye
I sholde be dede ther were none othez wey
God forbode quod the preest what ye say
yet hadde I puerz spende al the gode
Whiche that I haue or elles were I wode
Than that ye shulde falle in suche a myschief
For poure gode wyll sir haue ye right gode preest
Quod this chanon and fare wele graunt mercy
And went his way and neuiz the preest him se
After that day. and whan this preest sholde
Make assay at suche tyme as he wolde
Of this recepte fare wele it wol nat be
So thus beiaped and begyled was he
Thus makith he his introduction
To bryng folke to theire distruction
Considreth sires how that in eche estate
Betwyte men and golde ther is debate
So ferforth that bnnethes is there none
This multipliyng blyndeth so many one
That in gode feyth I trowe thad it be
The cause gretest of suche scarfite
These philosophers speken so mystely
In this crafte that men can nat come therby

The tale of the channons yeman

for any wytte that men may haue now a daies
They may wele chatern as doon Japes
And in theire termys settyn their lust and peyn
But to theire purpos shal they neuir atteyn
A man may lightly lerne if he haue ough
To multiply. and bryng his gode to nought
To whiche a lucre is in this worthy game
A manns myrthe it wol turne into grame
And empte also grete and heuy purses
And maken folke for to purchase curses
Of them that haue theire gode to them lent
Of for shame tho that haue be brent
Alas can they nat fle the fyres hete
ye that it vse I rede that ye it lete
lest that ye lese al for bette than neuir is late
Neuir to thryue were to long a date
Though ye prole cuir neuir shal ye it fynde
ye be as bolde as it bayerd the blynde
That blundreth forth and parlcastith none
He is as bolde to rynne agaynst a stone
As for to go besides in the wey
So fare ye that multiply I sey
If that poure eyen can nat se a right
Loke that poure mynde lacke nat his sight
for though that ye loke right brode and stare
ye shal wyne neuir of that chaffare
But waste alle that ye may rappe and renne
Withdraue the fyre lest it to fast brenne
Medlith no more with that arte I mene
for if ye do your thrifte is gone fulclene
And right as swythe I wyl you telle here
What philosophers dyd in this matere
So thus sayth Arnolde of the newe tong

The tale of the channons yeman

As his rosary makith mencion
He sayth right thus withouten any lye
Ther may no man mercury moztifye
But if it be with his brothers knowleggynge
How that he whiche first sayd this thyng
Of philosophers fadre was hermes
He sayth how that the dragon doutles
He dieth nat but if that he be slayn
With his brotther and that is for to seyn
By the dragon Mercury and none other
He vnderstondeþ and brymstone be his brotther
That oute of sol and luna were y drawe
And therfore sayde he take hede to my sawe
Let no man besp him this arte for to seche
But he the entencion and the speche
Of philosophers vnderstonde can
And if he do he is a lewde man
For this science and this honnyng sayd he
Is of the secrete of secretes parde
Also ther was a disciple of plato
That on a tyme sayde his mayster to
As his boke semoz wol bere wytnes
And this was his demaunde in sothfastnes
Tel me the name of that pryue stone
And plato aunswerde vnto him anon
Take the stone that Titanes men name
Whiche is that quod he magnacia is the same
Sayde plato ye sir is it thus
This is ignotum per ignocius
What is magnacia gode sir I you pray
It is a water that is made I say
Of elementes foure quod plato
Tel me the rote gode sir quod he tho

The tale of the chanoys yeman

Of that water if it be youre wyllle
Nay nay quod plato certeyn that I nyllle
The philosophers were sworne euerichone
That they sholde discouez it to none
Ne in no boke it wryte in no manere
For bnt to god it is so leef and dere
For he wol nat that it discoueryd be
But where it lyketh to his depte
Man to conspire and eke bnto defende
Whan that him lyketh so this is the ende
Than conclude I thus sithen that god of heuyn
Ne wol nat the philosophers neuyn
How that a man shal come bnto this stone
I rede as for the best let it gone
For who so makith god his aduersary
As for to worke any thyng in contrary
Of his wyllle. neuiz shal he thryue
Though that he multiplie terme of his lyue
And there a poynte for endyd is my tale
God sende euery gode man bote of his bale
Here endith the tale of the chanoys yeman



The tale of the doctoure of phisike

Here begynneth the tale
of the doctoure of phisike

¶ Her was as tellith titus liupus
A knyght that clepyd was virgynus
Fulfilled of honoure and of worthynes
And stronge of frendes and of richesse
A doughter had this knyght by his wyf
No children hadde he mo in al his lyf
Fayre was this mayde of excellent beaute
Aboue euery wight that men myght se
For nature hath with fowerayn diligence
Foumed her in so grette excellence
As though she wolde say lo I nature
Thus can I fourme and pepnte a creature
Whan that me lyst who can me contrefete
Pygmalion nat though he forge and bete
Or graue or pepnte for I dar wele sayn
Apelles zanzis sholde worche in beyn
To graue or pepnte or forge or bete
If they presumed me to countrefete
For he that is the fourmourr principalle
Hath made me his bycare generalle
To fourme and pepnte erthly creatures
Right as me lyst for alle thyng in my cure is
Vndre the mone that may wane and waxe
And for my werke nothyng wol I axe
My lord and I be fully of accorde
I made her to the worshipp of my lord
So do I alle myn other creatures
Of what coloures they be or what figures
Thus semyth me that nature wolde say
This mayde was of twelue yere age and twey

The tale of the doctoure of phispye

In whiche that nature had suche delyste
for right as he can pepnte a lpyl white
and rody as a rose with suche pepnture
She pepnted hath this noble creature
Di she was born vpon her lymes fre
where as by right suche coloures sholde be
and phebus dyde had his dresses grete
lyke to the stremys of his burnyng hete
and if that excellent was her beaute
a thousand folde more vertuous was she
In her ne lachith no condicioun
That is to pryse as by discrecioun
as wele in body as in goost chaste was she
for whiche she flored in birtynite
with alle humylite and abstynence
with alle a temperaunce and pacience
with mesure che and beryng of aray
Discrete she was in aunswering alwey
She was as wyse as pallas dare I seyn
her facunde che ful womanly and pleyyn
None countrefetpd termes hadde she
To seme wyse but after her deggre
She spake and alle her wordes more and lesse
Solwynng in vertue and in gentylnesse
Shamefast she was in maydens shamefastnesse
Constant in herte and euir in besynesse
Todyue her oute of ydle sloggardy
Vacus hadde of her mouth no maistrye
for wyne and yowthe doth venus encrese
as men in fyre wol cast oyle or grece
And of her owne vertue vncostreynd
She hath ful ofte tymes her seke feyned
for that she wolde fle the company

The tale of the doctoure of physyke

Where lykely was to treten of folp
As is at festes reuelles and daunces
That been occasioun of daiaunces
Suche thynges make children for to be
To sone rype and bolde as men may se
Whiche is ful parlous and hath been poze
For alle to sone may she lerne the loze
Of boldnesse whan she is weyen a wyf
And ye mastresses in poure olde lyf
That lordes doughters haue in gouernaunce
Ne takith of my wordes no displeaunce
Thynke that ye been set in gouernynge
Of lordes doughters only for two thynges
Ether for to haue kept poure honesty
Or elles ye haue fallen in frelty
And knowe wele ynough the olde daunce
And haue for sake fully myschaunce
For euirmoze, therfore for cristes sake
To teche them vertue loke that ye nat slake
A theef of benysoun that hath forlast
His licouresnesse and his olde crafte
Can kepe a forest best of any man
Now kepe them wele for and ye wol ye can
Loketh wele to no byce that ye assent
Lest ye dampned be for poure euyl entent
For who so doth a traptoure is certayn
And takith hede of that I shalle seyn
Of alle treason souerayn pestilence
Is whan a wight betrayeth innocence
Ye faders and ye moders eke also
Though ye haue children be it one or mo
Poure is the charge of alle theire surueyaunce
Whiles they been vndre poure gonernaunce

The tale of the doctoure of phisike

Beware if by ensamples of your lypnyng
Or by youre negligence in chastysnyng
That they ne peryshe for I dare wile sey
If that they do ye shal it dere abyde
Vndre a shipherde soft and negligent
The wolfe hath many a shepe and lambe to rent
Suffiseth ensamples ynough as here
for I must turne aye to my matere
This mayde of which I telle expresse
She kept her self she nedyd no maystre
for in her lypnyng maydens myght rede
As in a booke every gode word in dede
That longith to a mayde vertuous
She was so prudent and so bounteous
for whiche the fame oute sprong on every syde
Bothe of her bounte and of her beaute wyde
That throughe the londe they pryse her echone
That loued vertue saue eny alone
That sorow is of othere mennys wele
And glade is of his sorowe and vnhale
This doctoure makith this descripcion
This mayde on a day went to the town
Towarde the temple with her modre dere
As is of yong maydens the manere
Now was there a iustice in the town
That gouernoure was of that regiou
And so besyl this iuge his eyen cast
Vpon this mayde ayspyng her ful fast
As she cam forth by there the iuge stode
Anone his herte chaunged and his mode
So was he caught with beaute of this mayde
And to him self ful pryncely he sayde
This mayde shal be myn for any man

The tale of the doctoure of phisike

Anone the fende into his herte ran
And taughte him sodenly by what skight
The mayden to his purpos wyne he myght
For certis by no force ne by no mede
Him thoughte he was nat able for to spede
For she was stronge of frendes and che she
Confermyd was in suche iouerayn beaute
That wele he wist he myght her nat wyne
As for to make her with her body to synne
For whiche with grete deliberacioun
He sent after a chorle was in the town
The whiche he knewe ful subtil and ful bolde
This iuge vnto this chorle his tale hath tolde
In secrete wyse and made him to assure
He sholde telle it to no creature
And if he dyd he shold lese his hede
Whan assentyd was this cursed dede
Glade was the iuge and made glade there
And pauer him pestes precious and dere
Whan shapen was al this conspiracy
From poynte to poynte how that his lycery
Purfourmed shold be ful subtilly
As ye shalle here it after alle openly
Some goth this chorle that hight claudys
This false iuge that hight Appius
So was his name for it is no fable
But knowen for an historpal thyng notable
The sentence of it soth is oute of doute
This false iuge goth now fast aboute
To hasten his delyte alle that he may
And so besyl sone after on a day
This false iuge as tellith vs the stori
As he was wont sat in his consistory

The tale of the doctoure of phisyke

and paue his domes vpon sondry caas
This false chorle cam forth a ful grete paas
And sayd lord if it be youre wyll
As doth me right vpon my pytous bylle
In whiche I pleyne vpon virginus
And if he wol say it is nat thus
I wol preue it and fynde gode wytnesse
That soth is that my bylle wol expresse
The iuge aunswerd of this in his absence
I may nat geue diffynite sentence
Lette do calle him and I wol gladly here
Thou shalt haue right and no wrong here
Virginus cam to here the iustice wyll
And right anon was redde this cursed bylle
The sentence was therof as ye shal here
To you my lord Apppus so dere
She with youre poure seruaunt Claudius
How that a knyght callyd virginus
Apenst the lawe and apenst alle couyte
Holdith expresse apenst the wyll of me
My seruaunt. whiche that is my thralle by right
Whiche from myn house was stolen on a nyght
Whiles she was fulle yong I wol it preue
By wytnes lord so that ye nat greue
She nys nat his doughter what so he say
Wherfore my lorde iustice I you pray
rede me my thralle if it be youre wyll
So this was alle the sentence of this bylle
Virginus gan vpon the chorle beholde
But hastely or he his tale tolde
He wolde a defendyd it as sholde a knyght
And by wytnesse of many a trewe wight
That alle was false that sayd his aduer sarp

The tale of the doctoure of phisicke

This cursed iuge wolde no lenger tary
Ne here a worde more of birgynus
But paue his iugement and sayde thus
I deme anone this chorle his seruaut haue
Thou shalt no lenger in thy house her saue
Go sette her forth and put her in oure warde
This chorle shal haue his thralle thus I a warde
And whan this worthy knyght birgynus
Through sentence of the iuge Appius
Must by force his dere doughter reyn
Vnto the iuge in lycherie to lyen
He goth him home and set him in his halle
And lete anone his dere doughter calle
And with a face ded as a shes colde
Vpon her humble face he gan beholde
With faders pyte styckynge through his herte
Al wol he nat from his purpos conuerte
Doughter quod he birginea by the name
Ther been two weyes othez deth or shame
That thou must suffre allas that I was boze
For neuir thou deseruyest wherfore
To dye with a swerde or with a knyfe
O dere doughter whiche that alle my lyf
I haue fostryd by with suche plesaunce
That thou ne were oute of my remembraunce
O doughter whiche that my last wo
And in my lyf my last ioy also
O gemme of chastite in pacience
Take thou thy deth for this is my sentence
For loue and nat for hate thou must be dede
My pytous honde must smyte of thy hede
Allas that euir Appius the sey
Thus hath he iuged the to day

The tale of the doctoure of phispye

And tolde her al the caas as ye bi fore
Haue herd it nedith to telle it no more
O mercy dere fadre quod the mayde
And with that worde she bothe her armes leyde
Aboute his neche as she was wont to do
The terys brast out of her epen two
And sayd gode fadre shal I dye
Is ther no grace is ther no remedy
Nay certis dere doughter myn quod he
Than yeue me leue fader myn quod she
My deth to compleyne a lytel space
For parde I praye his doughter grace
For to compleyne oz he her slow allas
And god it wote nothyng was her trespas
But that she ran her fader for to se
To welcome him with grete solemnyte
And with that worde she fyl a swoune anon
And after whan her swounyng was agone
She ryseth vp and to her fader sayde
Blyssed be god that I shalle dye a mayde
Yef me my deth oz that I haue a shame
Doth with youre childe youre wyllle a goddes name
And with that word she prayeth ful ofte
That with his swerde he sholde smyte softe
And with that worde a swoun doune she fyl
Her fader with a soroufulle herte and wyllle
Her hede of smote and by the top it hent
And to the iuge he paye it in present
As he sat yet in dome in in consistory
Whan that the iuge it sawe as sayth the story
He badde take him and hange him also fast
But right anone alle the people in thraste
To saue the knyght for routhe and for pyte

The tale of the doctoure of phispye

for knowen was the fals iniquyte
The people anon hadde suspecte in this thyng
By maner of this choles chalengyng
That it was by assent of Appius
They wist wele that he was lecherous
Forth with vnto this appius they gone
And cast him in pryson and that anone
Where as he slow him self and claudius
That seruaunt was vnto this Appius
Was demyd for to be hanged vpon a tre
But virgynys of his grete pyte
So prayed for him that he was exiled
And elles certis hadde he be begyled
The remenaunt were honged both more and lesse
That consentyd were to this cursednesse
Here may ye se how synne hath his meryte
Be ware for no man wote how god wol smyte
In no degre ne in no maner wyse
The worme of conscience may ynough agtryse
Of wyched lypf though it so pryue be
That no man wote of but god and he
Whether that he be lewde man or leryd
He noot how sone he may be aferyd
Therfore I rede you this counceyl take
For sake synne or synne you forsake

Here endith the phisiciens tale
And begynne th the wordes of the hoost

O Bre hoost gan swere as he were wode
Harow quod he by naples and by blode
This was a fals theef a cursed iustyse
As shamefulle deth as herte can deuyse

The prologue of the Pardoner

Come to this fals iuges and theire aduocates
Alas this sely mayde is slayn alas
Alas to dere aboughte she her beaute
Wherfore I say that alle men may se
That pestes of fortune and of nature
Been cause of deth of many a creature
Her beaute was her deth I dar wele seyn
Alas so pytously as she was slayn
But herof wol I nat procede as now
Men haue ful ofte more harme than prow
But truly myn owne mayster dere
This is a pytous tale for to here
But meirthelesse passe ouir is no force
I pray to god so saue thy gentyl corps
And thy drynals and thy iourdeyns
Thyn ppocras and eke thy galiens
And euery boyss fulle of lectuary
God blisse them al and oure lady seint mary
So moot I the thou art a proppz man
And lyke a prelate by seint dampayn
Thou hast spoke ynough I can nat sey in terme
But wele I wote thou makyst my herte toerne
That I almoost haue caught a cardpacle
By corpus dominus but if I haue tryacle
Dreles a draughte of corny moysty ale
Or but I here anon a mery tale
My herte is lost for pyte of this mayde
Thou belamy thou John pardonere he sayd
Tel vs som myrthes or iapes right anon
It shalbe do he sayde by seint Runyon
But first quod he here at this ale stake
I wel bothe drynke and ete of a cake
But right anon these gentylles began to cry

The prologue of the Pardoner

Nay let him telle us of no rebaundrye
Tel us som moralle thyng that we may lere
Som wyte and than wol we gladly here
I graunte ywys quod he but I must thynke
Vpon som honest thyng whyles that I drynke

Here endith the wordes of the hoost
And begynneth the pardoners prologue

I Didynge quod he in chirche whan I preche
I peyne me to haue an haunten speche
And ryng it oute as rounde as goth a belle
For I can by rote alle that I telle
My tyme is euer one and alwey was
hady omnium malorum est cupiditas
first I pronounce whens that I come
And than my bylles shewe I alle and some
Durie liege lordes seale on my patent
That shewe I first my body to warrent
That no man be so bolde ne preest ne clerke
Me to distroube of cristes holy werke
And after that telle I forth my tales
Bulles of popes and cardynales
Of patriarkes and bysshoppes I shewe
And in latyn I speke wordes a fewe
To saffron with my predicacioun
And for to stere men to deuotioun
Thenne shewe I forth my long cristalle stones
y crammed in cloutes fulle of bones
Kelypes they been as wene they echone
Than haue I in laton a sholder bone
Whiche that was of an holy iewys shepe
Gode men say I take of my wordes kepe

The prologue of the Pardoner

If that this boon be wasshe in any wellle,
If howe or calf shepe or ox swelle
That any worme hath ete or him stong
Take water of this wellle and wasshe his tongge
And it is hole anone, and ferther more
Of pokes and of scabbes and euery soze
Shalle euery shepe be hole that of this wellle
Drynketh a draught take hepe of that I teile
If that the gode man that the bestes owyth
Wol euery weke or that the cok crowyth
Fastyng drynke of this wellle a draughte
As that holy Je W.oure elders taughte
His bestes and his store shal multiply
And sires also it helpth ielousye
And though a man be fallen in ielous rage
Let make with this water his potage
And neuer shal he more his wyf mystryste
Though he in soth the defaute by her wyf
Al hadde she take prestys two or thre
Here is a metaypore that ye may se
He that his honde wol put in this meteyn
He shal haue multiplyng of his grayn
Whan he hath sowen be it whete or otye
So that he offre pens or elles grotys
Gode men and women one thyng warne I you
If any wyght be in the churche now
That hath done synne so orrible that he
Dar nat for shame shryuen be
Or any woman be she yong or olde
That hath y made her husbonde cok or olde
Suche folke shalle haue no powe ne grace
To offre to my respyes in this place
And who so syndeth them oute of suche blame

The prologue of the Pardoner

Comyth by and offre in goddes name
And I assyle them by the auctorite
Suche as by bulle was graunted to me
By this gaude haue I wonne many a pere
An hundred marke sithen I was pardonere
I stond lyke a clerke in my pulpet
And whan lewde people be down y set
I preche so as ye haue herd bifoze
And telle an hundred false iapes more
Than payne I me to stretche forth my necke
And est and west vpon the people I beche
As doth a doue sytting vpon a berne
My hondes and my tonge goth so perne
That it is iope to se my vespnesse
Of auarice and of suche cursydnesse
Is alle my prechyng to make them fre
To peue their pens and namey vnto me
For myn entent is nat but for to wyne
And nothyng for correctioun of synne
I reche nat whan that they be berped
Though their soules gone a blakeberied
For certis fulle many a predicacioun
Solwynth ofte tyme of euyl entencioun
Som for plesaunce of folke and for flattery
To been anaunsed by ypocrysy
And som for beyne glozpe and som for hate
For whan I dare not othez weys debate
Than wol styng them with my tong smert
In prechyng so that they shalle nat astert
To be diffamed falsely if that he
Hath trespaced othez to my brethern or to me
For though I telle nat his propre name
Men shalle wele knowe that it is the same

The prologue of the Pardoner

By synes oz by other circumstaunces
Thus quyte I folke that doth vs displeasaunces
Thus spytte I oute my benygn hndre he we
Of holynesse to seme holy and trewe
But shortly myn entent I wol deuyse
I preche of no thyng but of couetyse
Therfore my teame is and euir was
Radix omnium malorum est cupiditas
Thus gan I preche the same wyse
To suche as be vsyng the synne of auarice
But though my self be gylty in that synne
yet can I make other folke to t wynne
from auarice, and soze them to repente
But that is nat my pryncipalle entente
I preche no thyng but for couetyse
Of this matere it outht ynough suffise
Than telle I them ensamples many oon
Of olde stozys long tyme agoon
for lewde people loue tales olde
Whiche thynges can they wel reporte and holde
What trowpe whiles that I may preche
And for to wynne golde and syluer for to teche
That I wol lyue in pouert wylfully
Nay nay I neuir thoughte it truly
for I wol preche and begge in sondry londes
I wyl nat do no labour with myn hondes
Ne make baskettes and lyue therby
Bicause I wol be nat begge ydelly
I wol be none of the aposteles countrefete
I wol haue money. wol chese and whete
Alle were it yeuyn of the pourest parre
Or of the pourest wydowe in a byllage
al sholde her children sterue for fampn

The prologue of the Pardoner

May I wol drynke the licoure of the Wyn
And haue a ioly wenche in euery toun
But herkeneth lordpnyges in conclusioun
poure lphynng is that I must telle a tale
Now I haue dronke a draughte of corny ale
By god I hope I shalle tel you a thyng
That shalle by reason be at poure lphynng
For though my self be a ful byciouse man
A moralle tale yet I pou telle can
Whiche I am wont for to preche and also Wynne
Now holde poure peas my tale I wol begynne

Here endith the pardoners prologue
And begynneth his tale



i A flaundere somtyme was a company
Of yong folke that haunted dryn folke
As pottle hazarde stelys and tauernys

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The tale of the Pardoner

Where as with harpes lutes and gyternes
They daunce and pley at the dyce both day & nyght
And etyn also and drynken aboue their myght
Thurgh whiche they done the deupl sacrifice
Within the deuplles temple in cursed wyse
The superfluytees abhomyable
Theire othes be so grete and so dampnable
That it is gryfely for to here them sweere
Dure blyssed lordes body they to tere
Them thought the iewys rent him nat ynough
And eche of them at others synne lough
And right anon cam in the tomblesterys
setys and smale and yong frutesterys
Syngers with harpes balades wafreyes
Suche as been verry the deuplles officerys
Tokyndel and blowe the fyres of lychery
That is anneved vnto glotony
The holy wryte take I to wytnesse
That lychery is in wyne and in dronknesse
Lo how that dronkyn loth vnkynde
Say by his daughters two vnwetyngly
So dronke he was he nyst what he wrought
And therfore soze repente him ought
Herodis who so wyl the storyes seche
There may ye lerne and by ensample teche
Whan he of wyne was replete at the fest
Right at his owne table paue his heest
To see the baptyst John ful gyllis
Seneke sayth eke gode wordes doutles
He sayth he can no difference fynde
Betwix a man that is oute of his mynde
And a man whiche that is dronke lewe
But that wodeness fallen in a shewe

The tale of the Pardoner

Perseuereth lenggere than doth bronknesse
Dute glotony ful of cursednesse
D cause first of oure confusioun
D origynalle synne of oure dampnacioun
Thyl criste hadde bought vs with his blode agayn
To how dere shortly for to seyn
A bought was this cursed belony
Corrupte was al this worlde throughe glotony
Adam oure forn fadre and his wyf also
fro paradise to labour and to wo
were dreyn for that vyce it is no drede
for whyles that Adam fastyd as I rede
He was in paradise and whan that he
ete of the frute defended on the tre
Anone he was oute cast to woo and peyne
D glotony on the oughit vs wele to pleyne
D wyf a man how many maledies
folowe of exceffe and of glotonyes
He sholde be the more mesurable
D of his dyette syttyng at his table
Alas the shorte throte the tendre mouthe
Makith that est and west north and southe
In erthe in eyre in water men to swynke
To gete a gloton deynste mete and drynke
D poule of this matere wele canst thou entrete
Mete into wombe and wombe eke into mete
Shal god distrope bothe as poule seyth
Alas a foule thyng it is by feyth
To say this worde and fouler is the dede
Whan men so drynkieth of the whyte and rede
That of his throte he makith his pryue
Throughe that cursed superfluyte
The appostel wepyng sayth ful pytously

The tale of the Pardoner

Ther walkyn many of whiche you tolde hane I
I say it now wepyng with pytous boyce
That they been enmyes of cristes croyce
Of whiche the ende is deth wombe is their god
O wombe o bely o styngyng cod
fulfylled of donge and of corrupcioun
At eyther ende of the soule is the soun
How grete cost and laboure is the to synde
These cohes. how they stampe streyne and grynde
And turne substaunce into accident
To fulfille alle thy lycorous talent
Dute of the harde bones knoken they
The mary for they cast naught awei
That may go through the golet soft and sote
Of spicery of leys barke and rote
Shal be his sause y made by delpte
To make him yet a newe appetyte
But certes he that haunteth suche delices
Is dede whyles that he lyueth in the byces
Alcherous thyng is wyne. and dronknes
Is ful of stryung and of wrechidnes
O dronken man disfigured in thy face
Soure is thy brethe foule art thou to embrace
And through thy dronken nose sowne th thy soun
As though thou saydest ay sampson sampson
And yet god wote sampson dranke neuir no wyne
Thou sayest as it were a styched swyne
Thy tong is lost and alle thy honest cure
For dronknesse is verry sepulture
Of manns wytte and his discrecioun
In whom that drynke hath dominacioun
He can no counseyl hepe it is no drede
Now hepe you fro the white and fro the rede

The tale of the Pardoner

Namely fro the Whyte Wyne of lepe
That is to selle in brydye strete or in chepe
This wyne of spayne crepith subtelly
In othez wynes growyng fast by
Of whiche ther riseth suche fumosite
That whan a man hath dronke draughtes thre
And wenyth that he be at home in chepe
He is in spayne right at the toun of lepe
Nat at rochel ne at burdeuy toun
And than wol he say sampson sampson
But herketh lordynges one worde þi you pray
That alle the souerayne actes dar þi say
Of victorpes in the olde testament
Througþ berz god that is omnipotent
Were doon in abstynence and in prayez
Fokith the byble and there ye may it sere
Fokith Attylla the grete conqueroure
Dyed in his slepe with shame and dishonoure
Bledyng ay at his nose in dronknesse
A capdeyne sholde lye in sobirnesse
And our alie this auyse you right wese
What was comaunded vnto lamuele
Nat samuel but lamuel say þi
Redith the byble and fynde it expressely
Of wyne peuyng to them that haue iustice
Nomore of this for it may suffice
a And now that I haue spoke of glotony
Now wol I defende you hasardry
Hasardry is berz modre of lesynges
And of discepte and cursed swerynges
Blaspheyme of criste manslaughtez and waste also
Of catel and of tyme and ferthermo
It is reпреef and contrary of honoure

The tale of the Pardonere

For to be holden a comon hasardoure
And euir the higher that he is in estate
The more he is holden desolate
If that a prynce vse hasardry
In alle gouernaunce and alle policie
He is as by comon opynyon
Y holde the lasse in reputacioun
Stylbone that was holde a wyse enbassadoure
Was sent into corynthe with grete honoure
fro calidon to make them alliaunce
And whan he cam him happyd this chaunce
That alle the gretest that were of that londe
Pleyng at the hasard he them fonde
for whiche as sone as that it myght be
He stale him home aye to his countre
And sayde there wyl I nat & se my name
I wol nat take on me so grete defame
you for allye to none hasardours
Sendith othez wyse enbassadours
for by my trouthe me were lpuer dye
Than I pou to hasardours sholde allye
for ye that been so glorious in honouris
Shalle nat allye you to no hasardours
As by my wyllle ne as by my trefte
To this wyse philosophes thus sayd he
Loke the thou to the kyng demetrius
The kyng of parthes as the boke sayth he
Send him a peyre of dyce of golde in scozne
for he hadde vsed hasarde ther bifore
for whiche he helde his gloze and his reuoun
At no balue or reputacioun
Lordes myght fynde othermanez pley
honest ynough to drue the day a wey

The tale of the Pardoner

n Now wol I speke of othes false and grete
A worde or two as many bokes trete
Grete sweryng is a thyng abhomyable
And false sweryng is a thyng more reprovable
The high god forbade sweryng at alle
Wytnesse of Mathew but in specialle
Of sweryng sayth holy Jerom
Thou shalt swere soth thy othes and nat lye
But swere in dome and in right wysnesse
But ydel sweryng is a cursydnesse
Beholde and se that in the first table
Of the high goddes best is honourable
How that the seconde heest of him is this
Take nat my name in ydelnesse amys
For rather he forbedith suche sweryng
Than homycide or any othez cursed thyng
I say as by ordre thus it stondith
This knowe they that his heerstys vnderstondeith
How that the seconde heest of god is that
And ferthermore I wol the telle at plat
That vengeaunce shalle nat parte from the house
That of his othes is to outrageous
By by goddes precious hert and his nayles
And by the blode of criste that in hayles
Seuyn is my chaunce and thyng is synke and trey
By goddes armes if thou falsly pley
This daggar shalle through thy herte go
This fruyte comyth of the beched bones two
For sweryng ire falsnesse and homycide
Now for the loue of criste that for vs deyde
Letyth poure othes bothe grete and smale
For cristes sake and herkeneth my tale
These ypotouzes thre of whiche I telle

The tale of the Pardonere

Long or to pryne Were rong any Belle
Were set them in a tauerne to drynke
And as they sat they herd a Belle clynke
Bifoze a cozs Were caried to his graue
That one of them gan calle to his knaue
Go bet quod he and aye redily
What corps is this that passeth forth hye
And loke that thou reporte his name wele
Sir quod the boy it nedith neuir a dele
It was me tolde or ye cam here t wo oures
He was parde an olde felowe of yours
Al sodenly Was he slayn to nyght
for dronke as he sat on his benche spryght
Ther cam a pryuy thief men clepe deth
That in this countre alle the people sleth
And with his spere he smote his herte at wo
And went his wey withoute wordes moo
He hath a thousand sleyn this pestilence
And mayster or ye come in his presence
He thynketh it were necessary
for to be ware of suche an aduersary
Deth is redy for to mete him euir moze
Thus taught me my dame I say no moze
A seint mary sayd this tauernere
The childe sayth soth for he hath this pere
Hens ouir a myle sleyn in a grete byllage
Bothe man and woman childe hyne and page
I trowe his habitacioun be there
To be auyssed grete wysdome it were
Dr that he dyd a man a dishonoure
ye goddes armes sayde this rrottoure
Is it such peryl with him for to mete
I shalle him seke by wey and eke by strete

The tale of the Pardoner

I shalle him sle by goddes digne bones
Herhyn felowes we be thre alle onys
Let eche of vs become others brother
And eche of vs holde by his honde to other
And we wol sle this traytoure deth
He shal be slayn he that so many sleth
By goddes dignyte oz it be nyght
To godder haue these thre their trouthes plight
Torque and by eche of them with other
As though he were his owne bozne brother
And by they stert alle dronke in this rage
And forth they gone toward that byllage
Of whiche the tauerner hath spoke biforn
And many a grysly othe haue they sworn
And cristes blissed body they tozent
Deth shalbe ded if that he may be hent
Whan they haue goon nat fully a myle
Right as they wolde haue gone ouir a stile
An olde man and a poure with them mette
This olde man ful mekely them grette
And sayd thus lordynges god you se
The proudest of these riottoures thre
Answerd what chorde with harde grace
Why art thou alle for wrapped saue thy face
Why lyuest thou so long in so grete age
This olde man gan loke in their bysage
And sayde thus for I can nat synde
A man though I walke into ynde
Neyther in cyte ne in byllage
That wol chaunge his pouthes for myn age
And therfore must I haue myn age styll
As long tyme as it is goddes wyll
Ne deth alas wol nat haue my lyf

The tale of the Pardonere

Thus walke I lyke a restles captyf
And on the grounde whiche is my moders gate
I knoke with my staf erly and late
And say to her leue modre let me in
To how I banysse flesche blode and shyn
allas whan shalle my bones be at rest
Moder with you wolde I chaunge my cheste
That in my chambrelong tyme hath be
ye for an heize cloute to wrappe in me
But yet to me ye wol nat do that grace
for whiche ful pale and wrechyd is my fac
And sires to you it is no curtesy
To speke to an olde man belony
But he trespase other in worde oz dede
ye may poure self in holy wryte rede
Apenst an olde man hore vpon his hede
ye sholde aryse wherfore I you rede
Ne doth to none olde man harme now
Nomore than ye wolde men dyd to you
In age if ye sholde longe abyde
And god be with you where ye go oz ryde
I must go thider as I haue to do
Nay olde chorle by god thou shalt nat so
Sayde this othez hasardoure anon
Thou partest nat so lyghtly by seint John
Thou spakest right now of that traytoure deeth
That in this countre alle oure frendes sleth
Haue here my trouthe thou arte his a spy
Tel where he is oz thou shalt it aby
By god and by the holy sacrament
for shortly thou arte one of his assent
To sle vs yong folke thou fals theef
Now sires quod he if it be your leef

The tale of the Pardoner

To fynde deth turne by this croked wey
for in this groue I him saue last by my sey
Vndre a tre and there he wol abyde
for youre boost he wol no thyng him hyde
Se ye that oke right there ye shal him fynde
God saue you that boughte agayn mankynde
And you amende thus sayd this olde man
And euery of these ryottoures ran
Tyl they came to the tre and there they fonde
Of floreyne fyne golde y copned rounde
wele up to an eyght busselles as them thought
Nolenger than after deth they soughte
But eche of them so glade was of that sight
for that the floreyne so faire were and bright
That they sat by the precious horde
The worst of them he spake the first worde
Brethern quod he take hepe what I say
My wytte is grete though that I bound and pley
This tresoure hath fortune vnto vs geuen
In myrthe and iolite oure lyf to spuen
And lyghtly as it comyth so wol we spende
By goddes precious dignite who wende
To day that we shold haue so fayre a grace
But myght this golde be caried fro this place
Home to my house and elles vnto poures
Than myght we say that it were al oures
Than were we in high felicitye
But truly by day it may nat be
Men wolde say that we were theys strong
And for oure owne tresoure doon vs hong
This tresoure must be caried by nyght
As wyfely and as skilly as it myght
Wherfore I rede let loke amonges vs alle

The tale of the Pardonere

Drawe cutte let se where that it wol falle
He that hath the shorrest cutte with hert blythe
Shal renne to toun and that fulle swythe
To brynge vs brede and wyne fulle pryuelly
And two of vs shalle kepe fulle subtelly
This tresoure wele and if he wol nat tary
Whan it is nyght we wol this tresour cary
By one assent where as vslyst best
That one of them brought strawe in his fist
And bad them drawe and loke whom on it word fal
And it felle on the pongest of them alle
And forth towarde the toun he went anon
And also sone as he was goon
That one of them spake thus vnto that othez
Thou wotest wele thou art my sworn brothez
Thy proufyt wol I telle the right anoon
Thou wost wele that oure felaue is goon
And here is golde and that ful herte plente
That shalbe departed amonges vs thre
But natheles if I can shape it so
That it departed were amonges vs two
Hadde I nat doon a frendes turne to the
That othez answerd I not how it myght be
I wote wele the golde shalbe oures two
What shal we say what shalle we do
Shalle it be counceyle sayd the first shrewe
And I shal tel the in wordes fewe
What we shalle do and brynge it wele aboute
I graunte quod that othez oute of doute
That by my trouthe I wol the nat bewrey
Now quod he thou wotest wele we be twey
And tweyne of vs shal strengtez be than one
Loke whan that he is set thou right anone

The tale of the Pardoner

Arise as though thou woldest With him pley
And I shalle him ryue through the sydes twey
Whiles thou strottelest With him in game
And With thy daggez loke thou do the same
Than shalle alle this golde departed be
My dere frende betwyte me and the
Than may we bothe oure lustes fulfille
And pley at the dyce right at oure owne wyll
And thus accorded be these shrewys twey
To slep the thridde as ye haue herd me say
This pongest whiche that went to the toun
fulle ofte in hert he rolleth vp and down
The beaute of these flozeyns newe and bright
O lord quod he if so were that I myght
Al this tresoure wyne to my self allone
Ther nys no man that lyueth vndre trone
Of god that sholde lyue as mery as I
And at the last the feende oure enemy
Put in his herte that he sholde porson be
With whiche he myght sle his felawes twey
For why the fend fonde him in suche luyng
That he hadde leue him in sorowe to bryng
For this was vtterly his entent
To sle them bothe and neuir to repent
And forth he goth ne lenger wolde he tary
Into the toun vnto an apotecary
And prayed him that he wolde him selle
Som porson that he myght his rattes quelle
And eke therwith was a polcat in his halwe
That as he sayd his capones hadde y slaue
And sayde he wolde wreke him if he myght
Of vermyen that dystroyed him by nyght
The apotecary aunswerd thou shalt haue

The tale of the Pardonere

a thyng as wyself god my soule saue
In alle this worlde ther is no creature
That ete and drynke of this confecture
Nat but the mountenaunce of a corne of whete
That he ne shal anoon his lyf forlete
ye sterue he shalle and that in lasse while
Or thou wylt go passyng half a myle
This popson is so strong and so byolent
This cursed man hath in his herte it hent
This popson in a bove and sithen he ran
Into the nexte strete vnto a man
And borowed him large botelles thre
And into the twebyn the popson poured he
The thridde he kepte cleene for his drynke
For al nyghte he shope him for to swynke
In caryng of this golde oute of this place
And whan this rrottoure with soz grace
Hadde fylled with wyne his grete botelles thre
To his felawes aye repayreth he
What nedith it to sermone of it moze
For right as they hadde cast his deth afoze
Right so they haue him sleyn right anoon
And whan this was done than spake that one
Now let vs sytte and drynke and make vs mery
And afterwarde we wol his body bery
And afterwarde it happyd them per caas
To take the hotel there the popson was
And draunke and yaued his felawe drynke also
For whiche anone they steruyn bothe two
But certis I suppose that Auicene
Wrote neuiz in no canoun ne in no fenne
More wondre sorowes of enpopsonyng
Than hadde these wrechis two in their endyng

The tale of the Pardoner

Thus endyd been these homycides tuo
And eke the false enpossoner also
O cursed syn fulle of cursidnesse
O traytours homycide o wychednesse
O glotony o luxury o hasardry
Thou blasphemur of crist With belony
And othes grete of vsage and of pryde
Alas mankynde how may it betyde
That to thy creatour whiche that the wrought
And with his precious blode the bought
Thou art so false and so vnkynde alas
Now gode men god forpene you your trespass
And ware you from the synne of auarice
My holy pardoun may you alle warice
So that ye offre nobles oz sterlinges
Dor elles siluer spones broches oz rynces
Bo with youre hede vndre these holy bulles
Comyth by ye wyues offreth of youre wolles
Your names I entre in my rolle anon
Vnto the blisse of heuyn shalle ye goon
I you assople by my high powez
You that wol offre as clene and as clere
As ye were bore to fires thus I preche
And Jesu crist that is oure soules leche
So graunte you his pardon to resceyue
For that is best I wol you nat deceyue
But sices o worde forgate I in my tale
I haue relyphes and pardon in my male
As fayre as any man in englonde
Whiche were me geue by the popes honde
If any of you wol of deuocioun
Offre and haue myn absolucioun
Comyth forth anon and knelith here adoun

The tale of the Pardonere

and mekely recepueth youre pardon!
Or elles takith pardon as ye wende
alle newe and fresshe at euery myles end
So that ye offre alwey newe and newe
Nobles or pens whiche that been gode and trewe
It is an honoure to eueriche that is here
That ye may haue a sufficient pardoneze
To assoyle you in countre as ye ryde
for auentures whiche that may betyde
for parauenture ther may falle one or two
Doun of his horse and breke his neche a two
Loke whiche a surete it is to you alle
That I am in youre felausship y falle
That may assoyle you bothe more and lasse
Whan that the soule shalle from the body passe
I rede that oure hoost here shalle begynue
for he is moost enuoluped in synne
Come forth sir hoost and offreth here anon
And thou shalt kysse the relyphes euerichone
ye for a grote vnbocke anone thy purse
Nay nay quod he than haue I cristes curse
Let be quod he it shal nat be so therhe
Thou woldest make me to kysse thyn olde breche
And swere it were a relyke of a scint
Though it were with thy fundement y peynthe
But by that croce whiche that seint elen fonde
I wolde I hadde thy colpons in myn honde
In stede of relyphes ether of seynthe Mary
Let cutte them of I wol helpe the them to cary
They shal be shryned in an hogges tozd
This pardonez aunswerd nat a word
So wroth he was he wolde no worde say
Now quod oure hoost I wol no lengere pley

The tale of the Pardoner

With the ne With none othez angry man
But right anone the worthy knyght began
Whan that he sawe that alle the people lough
No more of this for this is right ynough
Sir pardone: be mery and glade of chere
And ye sir hoost that be to me so dere
I pray you that ye kyssse the pardonere
And pardone: I pray the drawe the nere
And as we dyd let bslanghe and pley
Anone they kyssed and ryden forth thire wey

Here endith the Pardoners tale
And begynneth the shipmannes tale



a Marchaunte somtyme was at seint Denys
That riche was therfore men helde him wyse
A wyf he hadde of excellent beaute
And compenable and reuelous was she

The tale of the Shypman

Whiche is a thyng that causeth more dispence
Than worth is alle the chere and reuerence
That men them doon at festes and at daunces
Suche salutaciouns and countenaunces
Passen as doth a shadowe on a walle
But wo is him that pay must hor alle
The self husband algate he must paye
He must be bothe clothe and eke aray
Alle for his owne worship fullle richely
In whiche aray we daunse iolily
And if that he nought pay parauenture
Dreles lyst nat suche spences endure
But thynketh it is wastyd and y lost
Than must a nother pay for oure cost
Dilene be golde and that is parlous
This noble marchaunt helde a noble house
For whiche he hadde so grete reueyre
For his largenes and for his wyf was fayre
That wondre was but herketh to my tale
Amonge alle these gestes gret and smale
There was a monke a fayre man and a bolde
I trowe that threty wynter he was olde
That euir in one was drawyng to that place
This yong monke that was so fayre of face
Aquynted was so with the gode man
Sithen that theire first knowlege began
That in his house as famplier was he
As it is possible any frende to be
But forasmuche as this gode man
And eke this monke of whiche I began
Were bothe two born in one byllage
The monke him claymeth as for cosynage
And he aye sayth nat onys nay

The prologue of the Shypman

But was as glade therof as foule of day
For to his herte it was a grete plesaunce
Thus been they knytte with etern alliaunce
And eche of them gan other for to ensure
Of brotherhede while that theire lyf may dure
For was dan John and namely of dispence
As in that house and fulle of dyspence
To doon plesaunce and also grete costage
He nat forgate to geue the lest payge
In alle that house but after his degre
He paye the lord and also his menye
Whan that he cam som maner honest thyng
For whiche they were as glade of his comyng
As foule is sayn when the sonne by riseth
No more of this for it suffiseth
But so befyl this marchaunte on a day
Shope him to make redy his arrey
Towarde the toune of bruges for to fare
To by there a porcioun of ware
For whiche he hadde to parys sent anon
A messangere and prayed hath dan John
That he sholde come to seint denys and pley
With him and his wyf a day or twey
Or he to bruges went and alle wyse
This noble monke the whiche I you deuyse
Hath of his abbot as him lyst licence
Bicause he was a man of high prudence
And eke an officere oute for to ryde
To se theire graunges and thei hermyse wyde
And to seint denys comyth him anone
Who was so welcome as my lord dan John
Dure dere cosyn fulle of curtesy
With him he broughte a sub of maluesy

The tale of the Shypman

And eke another fulle of fyne Bernagge
And volatyle as was his vsage
And thus I lete them ete drynke and pley
This marchaunt and this monke a day or twy
The thridde day the marchaunte by riseth
And on his nedys sadly him auyseth
And by to his counterhouse goth he
To reken with him self wele may be
Of that yere how that it with him stode
And how that he dispendyd had his gode
And if encresyd he hadde or noon
His bokes and his bagges many one
He lepyth byforh him on his countynge borde
Fulle ryche was his tresoure and his horde
For whiche fulle faste his cowntre he shutte
And eke he nolde that no man sholde him lette
Of his accountynge for the meame tyme
And thus he sat tyl it was passed pryme
Dan John was ryse in the morowe also
And in the gardyn walked to and fro
And sayd his thynges ful coriously
This gode wyf cam walkynge pryncely
Into the gardyn there as he walked soft
And him salued as she hath doon ofte
A mayde childe cam in her company
Whiche as she lyst she may gouerne and tye
For yet vndre the perde was the mayde
O dere cosyn myn dan John she sayd
What ayleth you so rathe for to ryse
Nee quod he it ought ynough suffise
Fyne oures to slepe on a nyght
But it were for an olde passed wyght
As been these weddyd men that lye and dare
llh i

The tale of the Shypman

As in a fouzme sytteth a berzyp hare
Were alle forstraught With houndes grete and smale
But dere nece why loke ye now so pale
I trowe certis that oure gode man
Hath you laboured sithen the nyght began
That you were nede to reſte haſtely
And with that worde ſhe lough fulle merely
And with her owne thought weyt alle rede
This ſayre wyf gan ſhake her hede
And ſayd thus ye god wote alle quod ſhe
Nay coſyn it ſtondith nat ſo with me
For by that god that paue me ſoule and lyf
In alle the reame of ſfraunce is ther no wyf
That laſſe luſt hath to that ſorow pley
For I may ſyng alas and wel a wey
That I was born but to no wight quod ſhe
Dar I nat telle how it ſtondith with me
Wherefore I thynke oute of this ſonde to wende
Oz elles of my ſelf to make an ende
So fulle I am of drede and che of care
This monke began ſpon this wyf to ſtare
And ſayd alas my nece god forbede
That ye for any ſorowe oz for any drede
Fordo poure ſelf but telle me your greif
Parauenture I may in your myſchief
Counceyl oz helpe and therfore tellith me
Alle your annoye for it ſhal be ſecret be
For on my porthoſe here I make an othe
That neuir in my lyf for leef ne loth
Ne ſhal I of uo counſeyl you be wrey
The ſame quod ſhe to you I ſay
By god and by this porthoſe I you ſwere
Though men wol me alle to peces tere

The tale of the Shypman

Ne shalle I neuiz to go to helle
Belwep one worde of that ye me telle
Nat for no cosynage nor alliaunce
But verily for loue and assiaunce
Thus been they swore and therupon they kyft
And eche talkyd to othez what themlyst
Cosyn quod she if that I hadde space
As I haue non and namey in this place
Than wolde I telle a legende of my lyf.
What I haue suffrid sithen I was a wyf
With my husbonde al be he poure cosyn
Nay quod this monke by god and by seint martyn
He is no more cosyn vnto me
Than is the leef that hangith on the tre
I cepe him so by seint denys of fraunce
To haue the more cause of acquentaunce
Of you whom I haue loupd specially
Above alle othez women sikerly
This swere I you on my professioun
Tellith your greif lest he come adoun
And hyth you and go a wey anon
My dere loue quod she o my dan I shon
fulle leef were me this counseyl to hyde
But oute it must it may no lenger abyde
My husbond is to me the worst man
That euer was sithen the worlde began
But sithen I am his wyf it sytteth nat me
To telle no wight of oure pryuyte
Ne yther in bedde ne in none othez place
God shelde I sholde tel it for his grace
A wyf sholde nat say of her husbonde
But alle honoure as I can vnderstonde
Saue vnto you thus moche I telle shalle

The tale of the Shypman

As helpe me god he is nat worth at al
In no degre the value of a flpe
But yet me greuyth moost his nyggarde
And wele ye wote that women naturall
Desire thynges spyre as wele as do I
They wolde that theire husbonde sholde be
Hardy and wyse riche and thereto fre
And buyum to his wyf and freshe abedde
But by that ilke lord that for vs bledde
For his honoure my self for to araye
A sonday next I must nedes pay.
An hundred fraunkes and elles I am fore
yet were I lyue to be ynboze
Than me were do disclaunde or belony
And if my husbonde myght it spee
I nere but lost and therfore I you pray
Lene me this summe or elles must I deye
Dan John I say lene me this hundred frankes
Warde I wol nat sayle you my thankes
If that ye lyst to do that I you pray
For at a certayn day I wol you pay
And doon to you what plesaunce or seruyse
That I may do right as ye lyst deuise
And but I do god take on me vengeance
As foule as hadde genylpon of fraunce
This gentyl monke aunswerd in this maner
Now truly myn owne lady dere
I haue on you quod he so grete a routte
That I you were and plight my trouthe
That whan youre husbonde is to fflaundes fare
I wol delpyer you oute of this care
For I wol brynge you an hundrid frankes
And with that worde he caught her by the shank.

The tale of the Shypman

and her embraced hard and kyssed her oft
Goth now poure wey quod he alle styl and soft
and let vs dyne as sone as ye may
for by my kalender it is pryme of the day
Goth now and beth as trewe as I shalbe
Now elles god forbede sir quod she
and forth she goth as ioly as a pye
and hadde the cohes that they sholde hye
So that men myght dyne at none
Up to her husband is this wyf gone
and knockith at his countour boldly
who is there quod he. petyr it am I
Quod she. what sir how long wolke ye fast
how long tyme wol ye rekyne and cast
poure summes poure bokes and poure thynges
The deuyl haue parte of alle suche rekynges
ye haue ynough parde of goddes sonde
Come down to day and let poure bagges stonde
Ne be ye nat ashamyd that dan John
shal fasten alle this long day gone
what let vs go here a masse and go dyne
ye quod this man lytel canst thou deuyne
The coriouse besynesse that we haue
for of vs chapemen also god me saue
And by that lord that clpyd is seint pue
Scarcely among twyes ten twelue shalle shryue
Contynually lastyng vnto their age
we may wele make chere and gode by sette
And dryue forth the worlde as it may be
And kepe oure astate in pryuyte
Tyl we be dede or elles that we pley
A pylgrimage or goon oute of the wey
And therfore haue I grete necessite

The tale of the Shypman

Upon this queynite worlde to auyse me
For euer more we must stonde in drede
Of happe and fortune in oure chape manshede
To sclaundes wol I go to morowe at day
And come aye as sone as euer I may
For whiche dere wyf I the beseeke
As be to euer y wight buyum and meke
And for to kepe oure gode be curious
And honestly gouerne wele oure house
Thou hast ynought in euer y maner wyse
That to a thyrsty housholde may suffice
The lackith none array ne no bytyle
Of syluer in thy purse shalt thou nat fayle
And with that worde his counterdore he shypte
And down he goth he wolde no lenger let
And hastely a masse was there sayde
And spedily the tables were layde
And to dyner fast they them spedde
And richely the chapman this monke fedde
And after dyner dan John sobirly
This chapman toke a parte propirly
And sayd him thus cosyn it stondith so
That wele I se to brugges wol ye go
God and seint Austyn spede you and gyde
I pray you cosyn wysely thider ye ryde
Gouerne you also wele of poure dyete
Attemperatly and namely in this hete
Betwyte us two nedith no straunge fare
Fare wele cosyn god shelde you fro care
And if any thyng by day or by nyght
Be in my powe or in my myght
That ye me wolde comaunde in any wyse
It shalbe do right as ye wolde wyse

The tale of the Shypman

One thyng or that ye goon if it may be
I pray you to lene it vnto me
An hundred fraunches for a weke or tway
for certayn bestys that I must be
To store with a place that is oures
God helpe me so I wolde it were poures
I shalle nat fayle of my day
Nat for a thousand frankes o myle wey
But let this thyng be secret I you pray
for yet this nyght this bestys I must be
And fare now wele myn owen cosen dere
Gramercy of poure coost and of poure chere
This noble marchaunt and that anon
Aunswerd and sayde o cosyn myn dan John
Now sikerly this is a smalle request
My golde is poures whan that ye lyst
And nat only my golde but my chaffare
Take that ye lyst god shylde that ye spare
But one thyng ye knowe wele ynough
Of chapmen that theire money is their plough
We may creaunce whilcs we haue a name
But godeles for to be it is a shame
Pay it aye whan it lyth at poure ease
After my myght fayne wolde I you please
These hundred fraunches sette he forth anon
And pryuely he toke them to dan John
No wight of alle thislonde wist of this lone
Saupng this marchaunt and dan John allone
They drynke and speke androme a while and pley
Tyl that dan John rydeth to his abbey
The morowe cam and forth rideth this marchaunt
To flanders ward his prentyce brought him auaunt
Tyl he cam to bruges wele and merily

The tale of the Shypman

Now goth this marchaunt wele and be slyp
Aboute his nedys and byeth and creaunceth
He neyther pleyeth at the dyce ne daun sith
But as a marchaunte shortly to telle
He ledde his lyf and theire let him duelle
The sonday next that this marchaunt was agoon
To seint denys is comen dan Iho
With crowne and berd alle fresshe and newe shawe
In alle this house ther nas so lytel a knaue
Ne no wight elles but he was ful fayne
That my lord dan Ihon was come agayn
And shortly to the popnte right for to goon
This faire wyf accordeth with dan Ihon
That for his hundryd frankes he sholde al nyght
Haue her in his armes bolt by right
And this accorde parfourmed is in dede
In myrthe alle nyght a besy lyf they lede
Tyl it was day that dan Iohn yede his we
And had the meny fare wele and haue gode day
For none of then, ne no wight in the toun
Hath of dan Ihon any suspicioun
And forth he rydeth home to his abbey
Or where him lyst no more of him I say
This marchaunt whan that endyd was the seyre
To seint denys he can agayn repaire
And with his wyf he makith feest and chere
And tellith her the chaffare is so dere
That nedes must he make a cheuesauce
For he was bounde in a reconysauce
To pay tweny thousand sheldes anon
For whiche this marchaunt is to paris gone
To borowe of certayn frendes that he hadde
Acertayn of frankes and some with him he ladde

The tale of the Shypman

And whan that he was come into the town
for cheirte and grete affectioun
Vnto day John he goth first him to pley
Nat for to aye ne borowe of him money
But for to wytte and se his welesfare
and for to telle him of his chaffare
as frendes doon whan they mete in fere
Dan John him makith feste and mery there
and he him tolde fulle specialy
how he hadde wele spedde and graciously
Thanked be god alle hool his marchaundise
saue that he must in alle maner wyse
makyn a cheuesaunce as for the best
and than he sholde be in ioy and rest
Dan John aunswerd certis I am fayne
that ye in hele ar comen home agayn
and if that I were rithe as I haue blis
Of twenty thousand sheldes sholde ye nat mys
for ye so kyndely this othe day
lent me golde and as I can and may
I thanke you by god and by seint Jame
but natheles I toke it vnto oure dame
poure wyf at home the same golde aye
Upon poure benche she wote is wele certayn
By certeyn tokenes that I can you telle
Now by poure leue I may no lenger duelle
Dure abbot wol oute of this town anon
and in his company must I goon
Grete wele oure dame myn owen nece swete
and fare wele dere cosyn tyl we mete
This marchant whiche that was ful ware & wyse
creaunced hath and payde eke in parise
To certayn lumbardes redy in theire honde

The tale of the Shypman

The some of golde and gате of hem his bonde
And home he goth as mery as a poppyngay
For wele he knewe he stode in suche array
That nedes must he wyne in that bygge
A thousand fraunkes aboue alle his costage
His wyf ful redy mette him at the gate
As she was wont of olde vsage algate
And alle that nyght in myrth they be set
For he was riche and clerely oute of det
Whan it was day the marchaunt gan embrace
His wyf alle newe and kyssed her in her face
And by he goth and maketh it fulle tough
Nomore quod she by god ye haue ynough
And watounly with him se pleyed
Tyl atte last the marchaunte thus sayd
By god quod he I am a lytel wrothe
With you my wyf alle though it be me lothe
And wote ye why by god as I gesse
That ye haue made a maner straungenesse
Betwyte me and my cosen dan John
Ye shoulde haue warned me or I had goon
That he hadde you an hundred fraunkes payde
By redy token and helde him euyl appased
For that I to him spake of cheuesaunce
He semyd so as by his countenaunce
But neuerthelesse be god oure heuyn kynnyng
I thought to aske of him nothyng
I pray the wif do no more so
Tel me now or that I fro the go
If any dettoure haue in myn absence
Ppayed the lest by thy nettelence
I myght him aske a thing that he haue payed
This wyf was nat afferde ne affreyde

The tale of the Shypman

But boldely she saide and that anon
Mary I diffy that fals monke dan John
I hepe nat of his toknes neuiz a deel
He toke me certayn golde that wote I wele
What. euyl thedom on his monkes snowte
For god it wote I wende withouten doute
That he hadde geuen it me bicause of you
To do ther with myn honoure and my prowte
For cosynage and eke for helythere
That he hath hadde fulle often tymes here
But sithen I se it stont in suche disiont
I wol aunswere you shortly to the poynnt
Ye haue no slacker dettoure than am I
For I wol pay you redily
From day to day if so be that I sayle
I am youre wyf score it vpon my tayle
And elles I shalle pay as sone as euir I may
For by my trouthe I haue on myn arraz
And nat in wast bestowd it eueryderf
And for I haue bestowd it so wele
For youre honoure for goddes sake I say
As be nat wrothe and let vs laught and pley
Ye shalle my ioly body haue to wedde
By godde I wol nat pay yow but a bedde
Forgyue it me myn owne spouse dere
Turneth hether makith bettre there
This marchaunt sa we ther was none other remedy
And for to chide it were but a foly
Sithen that thyng may noon other be
Now wyf he saide and I forgyue it the
And by thy lif be no more so large
Kepe beeter thy gode this gyue I the in charge
Thus endith my tale and god vs sende

The tale of the Shypman

Talyngh ynogh vnto oure lyues ende

Here endith the shypmannes tale

And begynneth the wordes of the hoost

W He sayd by corpus dominus said oure hoost

Now long moot thou sayle by the coost

Thou gentyl mayster gentyl marinere

God peue the monke a thousand last quad yere

A ha felawes beware of suche a iape

The monke put in the mannys hode an ape

And in this wyse eke by seint Austyn

Drawith no monkes no more to poure Inne

But now pas ouir and lette vs seke aboute

Who shalle telle a tale first of alle this route

A nother tale and with that worde he sayde

As curtesty as it hadde be a mayde

My lady priouresse by poure leue

So that I wylst I sholde you nat greue

I wolde deme that ye telle sholde

A tale nexte if so were that ye wolde

Now wol ye bouche sauf my lady dere

Gladly quod she and sayd as ye shal here

Here endith the wordes of the hoost

Here begynneth the priouresses prologue

Domine dominus noster quam admirabile
est nomen tuum in vniuersa terra.

I Orde oure lorde thy name euir marvelous

Is in this lartge worlde y spred quod she

For nat alle only on thy laude precious

Parfourmyd is by men of diggnyte

But by the mouthe of children thy bounte

Parfourmed is for on the brest sowhyng

Somtyme she we they thyng herlyng

Wherfore in laudes as I can and may

The prologue of the Prioressse

Of the and of the white lily floure
Whiche that the bare is a mayde alwey
To telle a story I wol do my labour
Nat that I may encrese her honour
For she her self is honour and the rote
Of bounte nexte her sonne and soules bote

O moder mayd o mayde and modre fre
O busshe vnbrent brennyng in moyses sight
That rauesshedyst down from the depte
Throughe thy humblenes the goost that in the light
Of whose vertue whan he thy hert lyght
Conceyued was the faders sapience
Helpe me to telle it in thy reuerence

Lady thy bounte thy magnificence
Thy vertue and thy grete humylite
Ther may no tonge expresse in no science
For somtyme lady or men praye the
Thou goost bifore of thy benignyte
And getyst vs the light of thy prayer
To gyde vs vnto thy sone so dere

My honnyng is so weke o blyssfulle quene
For to declare thy high worthynesse
That I ne may the weyghe sustene
But as a childe of twelmonth olde or lesse
That can vnneeth any worde expresse
Right so fare I and therfore I you pray
Gidith my song as I shalle you say

Here endith the priouresses prologue
And here begynneth her tale

The tale of the Priouresse



t Her Was in Asie in a grette cyte
 Amonge cristen folke a Surpe
 Susteyned by a lord of that countre
 For foule vsure and lucre of belony
 Hatful to crist and to his company
 And through this strete men myght ryde and wend
 For it was fre and open at euery ende

A lytel scole of cristen folke there stode
 Doun at the ferther ende in whiche ther were
 Children an hepe comen of cristen blode
 That lernyd in scole yere by yere
 Suche maner doctryne as men vsen there
 This is to say to synge and to rede
 As smale children doon in theire childhede

Among these children was a wydowes sone
 A lytel clertyon seuyng yere of age
 That day by day to scole was his wone
 And eke also where that he sawe the ymage

The tale of the Shypman

Of cristes modre had he in vsage
as him was taught to knike adoun and say
his Aue maria as he goth by the wey

Thus hath this wydow her lytel sonne taughte
Oure blissed lady cristes modre dere
To worship ay and he forgate it naughte
for the sely childe wolde alwey sone lere
But whan I remembre me on this matere
Seint nycolas stont euer in my presence
for he so pong to crist dyd reuerence

This lytel chyld his litel booke lernynge
As he sat in the scole at his prymmer
He Alma redemptoris mater herd synge
As children lernyd their antiphones
and as he durst he drewe ay nere and nere
and herknyd ay the wordes and the note
Tyl he the first verscoude alle by rote

Naught wyth he what this latyn was to say
for he so pong and tendre was of age
but on a day his felaue gan he pray
To expounde him the song in his langage
O telle why this song was in vsage
This prayde he him to constrewe and declare
fulle ofte tymes vpon his knes baze

His felaue whiche that elder was than he
Answerd him thus this I haue herd say
was made of oure blissed lady fre
her to salue and eke her to pray
To be oure helpe and socoure whan we dey
I can no more expounde in this mater
Ierne song I can but lytel graue

And is this song made in reuerence
Of cristes modre sayd this innocent

The tale of the Priouresse

Now certayn I wol do my diligence
To conne it alle oz crist mas is al y went
Though that I for my prymer be shent
And shoulde be bete thries in an houre
I wol it honne oure lady to honoure

His fela we taught him homward pryuelly
fro day to day tyl he coude it al by rote
And than he song it wele and boldly
fro worde to worde accordyng by the note
Thys aday it passed through his throte
To scoleward and homward when he went
Wher cristes modre set was alle his entent

As I haue sayd through oute the Iury
Thys lytel childe cam walkyn to and fro
ful merily wolde he syng and cry
O alma redemptoris mater cuius mo
The swetnesse his hert persed so
O cristes modre that he to her pray
he can nat stynt of syngyng by the wey

Dure first to the serpent sathanas
That hath in iewes hert his waspes neste
Up swalle and said o ebrayn people allas
Is this a thyng that is to be honest
That suche a boy shal walke as him lyst
In youre dyspyte and syng of suche sentence
Whiche is ayenst oure lawes reuerence

fro thenis forth the Jewys haue conspired
Thys innocent oute of this worlde to chafe
An homicyde therto haue they hyred
Right at an alep hadde a pryue place
And as the chyld gan forth by to pace
Thys cursyd Jewe him hent and held fast
And cutte his throte and in a pytte him cast

The tale of the Priouresse

I say that in a Wardrope they him threwe
Where as the Jewys purge their entrapl
Cursed folke of herodes alle ne we
What may your curst entent you auayle
Murdre wol oute certeyne it wol nat fayle
And namely ther the honoure of god shal sprede
The blode oute crieth on your cursed dede

A martir solddyd into birtgynite
Now mayst thou syng folowynge eir in one
The white lambe celestalle quod he
Of whiche the grete euangelyst seint John
In pathmos wrote whiche sayth that they goon
Bifore this lambe and syng a song ay ne we
That neuer flesshely woman they ne knewe

This poure widowe a wayteth alle that nyght
After her lytel childe and he cam naught
For whiche as sone as it was day light
With face pale of dede and besy thought
She hath at scole and elles where him sought
Tyl fynally so fer she gan espye
That he last seyn was in the Jury

With moders pyte in her brest enclosed
She goth as she were half oute of her mynde
To euery place where she hath supposed
By lykelyhede her lytel childe to fynde
And eir on cristes modre meke and kynde
She cryde and at the last thus she wrought
Among the cursed Jewes she him sought

She aveth and she freyneth pytously
Of euery Jue that duellyd in that place
To telle her if her childe went ought forth by
They sayd nay but iesu of his grace
paued in her thought within a lytel space
That in that place after her sone she cryde

The tale of the Priouresse

Where he was cast in a pyt besyde

O grete god that parfournyn thy laude
By mouth of innocentes lo here thy myghte
This gemme of chastite this emeraude
And eke of martirdome the ruby brichte
There he with throte y couen tyth vp right
He Alma redemptoris gan to synge
So loude that alle the space gan for to rynge

The cristen folke that by the strete went
In cam for to wondre spon this thyng
And hastely they for the prouost sent
Whiche fonde the chyld freschely yet bledynge
And herieth crist that is of heuyn kyng
And eke his modre honoure of mankynde
And after that the Jues let he bynde

This childe with pytous lamentacion
Up taken was syngeyng this song alway
And with honoure and grete processyon
They carpy him into the nexte abbey
His moder swounyng by the bere ley
Wyneth myght the people that was there
This sorouful rachel brynge from the bere

With turment and with shameful deth echoon
This prouest doth this Jewes for to sterue
That of this murdre wyf and that anoone
He nolde no suche cursydnesse obserue
Eupl shal he haue that eupl wol deserue
Wherfore with wyld horse he dyd them draue
And after he haungyd them by the lawe

Vpon his bere aplyeth this innocent
Bifore the hygh autre while the masse last
And after that the abbot and his couent
Them spedde for to berp him ful fast
And whan they holy watez on him cast

The tale of the Priouresse

yet spake this childe whan sprent was holy water
He song o alma redemptoris mater

This abbot whiche that was an holy man
As monkes been or elles ought to be
This yong childe to coniure he began
And sayd o dere childe I coniure the
In the vertue of the holy trinite
Tel me what is thy cause for to syng

Sithen that thy throte is cutte to my sempnyng

My throte is cutte but buto my necke goon
Sayd this chylde and as by wep of kynde
I shorde haue dyed ye long tyme a goon
But Jesu crist as ye in bokes fynde
Wol that his glory last and be in mynde
And for the worship of his moder dere
yet may I syng o alma loude and clere

This welke of mercy cristes modre swete
Blouyd alwey as after my konnyng
And whan that I my lyf sholde forlete
Tome she cam and hadde me for to syng
This anteme verily in my dyng
As ye haue herde and whan that I hadde song
We thoughte she leyde a greyn spon my tong

Wherfore I syng and syng must certayn
In honoure of that blyssed mayde fre
Tyl fro my tong taken is the greyn
And after that thus sayd she to me
My lytel childe than wol I feche the
Whan that the greyn is fro the tong ytake
Be nat agast I wol the nat forsake

This holy monke this abbot him mene I
His tongge oute caught and toke a wey the greyn
And he paue hy the goost fulle softly
And whan th is abbot hadde this meruayle seyn

The tale of the Priouresse

His salt terps trilled down as rayne
And grouelþng platte he fyl to the grounde
And styl he lay as he hadde be y bounde

The couent eke lay vpon the pament
Weppng and heripng cristes modre dere
And after that by they rose and forth they went
And toke a wey this martir fro his bere
And in a tombe of marbryl stones cleze
Enclosen they this lytel body's wete
There he is now god lene be for to mete

O yong hugh of lyncoln slayn also
With cursed Jues as it is notable
For it is but a lytel while ago
Pray eke for be we synful folke vnstable
That of his mercy god so mercypable
O be his grete mercy multiplie
For reuerence of his modre mary

Here endith the priouresse tale

Here folowith the prologue of chaucers tale
W Han sayd was this myracle euery man
As sobre was that wondre was to se

Tyl that oure hoost to iapen began
And than at erst he looked vpon me
And sayd thus what man art thou quod he
Thou lokest as thou woldest fynde an hare
For euil vpon the gruonde I se the stare

Approche nere and loke by merily
Now ware you sires and let this man haue place
He is shape in the wast as wele as I
This were a popet in an arme to embrace
For any woman smalle and fayre of face
He semyth elyssh by his countenaunce
For vnto no wight doth he daliaunce

Say now som what sitthen othez folke hau

Ryme of Sir Topas

Tel vs a tale of myrthe and that anoon
Hoost quod he ne be nat euyl appayed
for othez tale certayn can I none
But of a ryme I lernyd long a goon
ye quod he that is gode ynough let vs here
Som depnte thyng me thynketh by thy chere
Here endith the prologue
And begynneth Ryme of sir Topas



¶ Eften lordes in gode euten
And I wol telle herament
Of myrthe and of solace
And of a knyght fayre and gent
In batel and in turnament
His name was was sir Topas
p borne he was of fer countre
In straundes alle, he ponde the see
At popozynge in the place
His fader was a man ful fre
A lorde he was of that countre

Ryme of Sir Topas

As it was goddes grace
Sir Topas weyt a doughty sweyne
White was his face as paynemayne
His lippes reed as rose
His rode is lyke scarlet in greyn
As I telle you in gode certayn
He hadde a semely nose
His here his berde was lyke saffron
That to his gyrdyl raught a doun
His shone of fyne cordwane
Of bruges were his hosen broun
His robe was of spelatoun
That cost many a Jane
He coude hunt at the wylde dere
And ryde an haukynge for ryuere
With grey goshauke on honde
Therto he was a grete archere
Of wraстыng was ther none his pere
Ther any ram sholde stonde
ful many a mayde bright in boure
They mozed for him paramoure
Whan them were bet to sleke
But he was chaste and no lechoure
And swete as is the bromeble floure
That berith the rede hepe
And so it fel bpon a day
For soth as I you telle may
Sir Topas wolde oute ryde
He worde bpon his horse gray
And in his honde a launce gay
A long swerde by his syde
He pryched through a fapre forest
Therin is many a wylde best
ye bothe bukke and hare

Ryme of sir Topas

And as he prycke ⁊ north and est
I telle it you him hadde almeſt
Betwix a ſore care
Ther ſprongen herbes grete and ſmale
The licorice and the retuale
And many a clove gilofez
And notemyge to put in ale
Whether it be moyſt or ſtale
Or for to lay in coſtre
The birdes ſyng it is no nay
The ſperhauke and the popyngeay
That ioye was to here
The throſtyl made eke his lay
The wode doune ſpon the ſpray
He ſang ful loude and clere
Sir Topas ſyl in loue longyng
At whan he herde the thruſtyl ſyng
And prycked as he were wode
His ſayre ſtede in his prickyng
So ſwete that men myght him wryng
His ſpydes were al blode
Sir Topas eke ſo wery was
For prickyng in the ſoft gras
So fiers was his roage
That down he leyde him in the place
To make his ſtede ſome ſolace
And paue him gode forage
A ſeint mary benedicite
What ayleth this loue at me
To bynde me ſo ſore
We dremyd alle this nyght parde
An elſe quene ſholde my lady be
And ſcepe vndre my goze
An elſe quene wol I haue y wys

Ryme of Sir Topas

For in this worlde no woman is
Worthy to be my make in toun
Alle othez women I forsaue
And to an elphe quene I me take
By dale and eke by doun
Into his sadyl he clambe anon
And pricked ouer stile and stone
An elphe quene to a sppe
Tyl he so long hath ryden and goon
That he sonde a pryue wone
In the countre of fayre so wyld
For in that countre was ther none
Neyther wyf ne chyld
Tyl that ther cam a grete gyaunt
His name was sir oliphaunt
A parlous man of dede
And sayde childe by termagyaunt
But if thou prycke oute of myn haune
Anone I sle thy stede With mace
Here is this quene of fayre
With harpe and lute and symphon
Duellynge in this place
The childe sayde also moot I the
To morowe wol I mete with the
Whan that I haue myn armoure
And yet I hope par my fay
That thou shalt with this launce hay
Apyen it ful sore Thy mawe
Shal I perce if may
Or it be fully pryue of the day
For here shalt thou be slaue
Sir Topas drewe a bawe fulle faste
The gyaunt at him stones cast
Dute of a fyl staf spyng

Ryme of sir Topas

But fayre a scappd sir Thopas
And al was through goddes grace
And through his faire beryng
ye lysteneth lordynges to my tale
perpez than the nyghtyngale
I wol with you rounne
How sir Thopas with sydes smale
Prichyng our hylle and dale
Is come agayn to toun
his mery men comaundith he
To make him bothe game and yle
for nedes must he fight
With a gyaunt with hedes thre
for paramoure and iolite
Of one that shone so bright
Come do he sayde my mynstralles
And gestoures for to telle tales
Anone in my armyng
Of romaunces that been ryalle
Of popes and of cardynalle
And eke of loue longyng
They fet him forth swete wyne
And made in a messelyne
And ryalie spycoloze
Of gyngebrede that was so fyne
And lycorice and eke comyn
With sugre that is try
He hadde nexte his white lere
Of clothe alake fyne and clere
A breche and eke a sherte
And next his shert a haketon
And our that an habergeon
for perspyng of his herte
And ouer that a fyne hauberke

Ryme of Sir Topas

Was alle y wrought of Iues warke
ful strong it was of plate
And ouer that his cote armoure
As whyte as is the lylly floure
In whiche he wol debate
His shelde was al of golde so rede
And therin was a bores hede
A charbokyl by his syde
And there he swoze on ale and brede
How that the gyaunt shalbe dede
Betwixte what may betwixte
His ianbedcuy were of quyreboty
His swerd is shetthe of yuoy
His helme of latoun bright
His sadyl was of reuelbone
His brydel as the sone shone
Was as the mone light
His spere was of fyne cypresse
That bedith warre and nothyng peas
The hede fulle sharpe y grounde
His stede was alle dappyl gray
It goth an amble in the wey
fulle softly and rounde in londe
To lordynges myn here is a fyte
If ye wol any more of it
To telle yet wol I fonde
n Wholde your mouthe paz charite
Bothe knyght and lady fre
And herkne to my spelle
Of a batayl of cheualry
And of ladies loue drurye
Anoon I wol you telle
Open speke of Romaynes of pryce
Of hornchylde and of ypotyse

Ryme of sir Topas

Of beys and of sir gay
Of sir libey and of sir playndemoure
But sir Topas berith the flour

Of ryalle cheualry
His gode stede alle he bestrode
And forth vpon his wey he rode
As sparke oute of bronde
Vpon his creest he bare a toure
And therin styched a lylly floure
God shelde his body from shonde
And for he was a knyght auenterous
He nolde slepe in none house
But liggyn in his hode

His bright helme was his wongez
And by baptyeth his destrez
In herbes fyne and good
Him self dranke water of the wellle
As dyd the knyght sir percyuel
So worthely vndre wede

n D more of this for goddes dignyte
For thou quod oure hoost makyst me
So wery of thy veryle wdesse
That also wys god my soule bles
Wyn eris akyn of thy draffy speche
Now suche a ryme the deuyt I betech
This may wele be a ryme dogrel quod he
Why so quod I why wolt thou let me
More of my tale than a nother man
Sithen it is the best ryme that I can
By god quod he fulle playnly at one worde
Thy draffy rymyng is nat worth a torde
Thou dost naught elles but spendest tyme
Sir at one worde thou shalt no lenger ryme
Let se whether thou canst aught telle in geste

The Wordes of the Hoost

Dr telle in prose som what at the lest
In whiche ther may be some myrthe or doctryne
Gladly quod he by goddes swete pynte
I wol you telle a lytel thyng in prose
That ought to lpyhe you as I suppose
Dr elles certayn ye be dangerous
It is a moral tale vertuous
Al be it tolde somtyme in sondry wyse
Of sondry folke as I shal you deuyse
And thus ye wote that euery euangelyst
That telle vs the payne of Iesu criste
He sayth nat alle thyng as his felawe doth
But neuir theles their sentence is alle soth
And alle accordyng as in their sentence
Al be ther in their tellyng difference
For som of them sayth more and some lesse
Whan they his pytous passoun expresse
I mene of marke mathewe Luke and Ihon
But doutles their sentence is alle one
Therfore lordynges I you be seche
If that ye thynke I barp in speche
As thus though I telle some dele more
Of prouezbes than ye haue herde bifoze
Comprehended in this lytel tretys here
To enforce with the effecte of my matere
And though I nat the same wordes say
As ye haue herde yet to you alle I pray
Blamyth me nat for as in my sentence
Shulle ye nowhere fynde no difference
For the sentence of this tretys lyte
After the whiche mery tale this I wryte
And therfore herhuerth what I shalle say
And let me telle my tale I you pray
Sequitur Chaucers tale



a pong man that called was
mellebeus the whiche was
 myghty and ryche begat a
 daughter vpon his wyf that called
 was prudence whiche daughter cal-
 led was: Sophye vpon a day besyl
 that he for his disporte wente hym in
 to the feldys for to playe. his wyf &
 his daughter hath he lefte within his
 hous of wiche the doores were fast
 shutte. Thre of his olde foes hath hit
 aspyed & sette ladders vnto the wal-
 les of his hous & by the wyndowes
 ben entred in And bete his wyf. and
 wounded his daughter with fyue mor-
 tal woundes in fyue sondre places
 that is to say in her feet. in her han-
 des. in her eres. in her nose and in her
 mouth. and lesten her for dede and
 wenten her waye. whan mellebeus
 returned was in to his hous and sa-
 we al this mychty. he lyste a mad-

man rented his clothes began to we-
 pe and crye.

Rudence his wyf as ferforth
 as she durst besoughte hym
 of his weping to stynte. But
 not forthy he began to wepe & crye
 euer lenger the more. This noble
 wyf prudence remembred her vpon
 the sentence of Dyrde in his booke
 that cleped is the Remedye of souer-
 where as he sayth. he is a fool that
 distrobleth the modre to wepe in the
 dethe of her childe. tyl she hath wepte
 her fille as for a certayn tyme. And
 than shal a man doo his diligence
 wyth ampyable wordes her to com-
 forte. And praye her of her wepyng
 to cese. For whiche reason this noble
 wyf prudence suffryd her husbonde
 to wepe & crye as for a certayn space
 And whā she sawe her tyme. she said
 to hym in this wyse. Alas my lord

sayd she why make ye your self for
to be sly a fool for soth it apertay-
neth not to a wyse man to make su-
che sorowe your daughter by the gra-
ce of god shal warisshe & escape. & al-
were it so þ she right now were dede.
ye ne ought not for her deth your self
to dystrope. Senecle sayth. the wy-
se man shal take not to grete dys-
forte for the deth of his children. but
certes he shuld suffre it in paciẽce as
wel as he abydeþ the deth of his o-
wen propre persone.

His mellebe⁹ answered anon
and sayde what man shole
of his weppng stynte þ hath
so grete cause to wepe. Ihesu cryst
our lord hym self wepte for the deth
of lazarus his frende. Prudence ans-
werd certes wel I wote a temperate
weppng is nothing defended to hym
that is sorowful amonge folk in
sorowe. But it is rather graunted
hym to wepe. The apostle Paule
vnto the romayns wryteth. Many
shal reioyse wyth hem that make io-
ye and wepe wyth such folk as py-
ne. But a temperate weppng tough
it be graunted hym. Outrageous we-
ppng certis is defēded mesure of we-
ppng shold be cōsidred after the sore
þ Senecle teacheth us whā thy frende
is dede sayd he. Lete not thin eyen be
to moost of terys ne to moche drie. Al-
though thy terys com to thyn eyen
lete hem not falle. And whan thou
hast lost thy frende. do dyligently to
gete the another frēde. And this is be-
ter than for to wepe for thy frende

whiche thou hast lost. For therein is
no bote And therfore yf thou gouv-
ne the by sapience put away sorowe
out of thy herte.

Remembre the that Ihesus
Spreke sayth. That a mā
that is Joyous & glade in
herte. it hym conserueth flourishyng
in age. and sothly sorowful herte ma-
keth his bones drye. He sayth also
thus that sorowe in herte sleeth ful
many a man. Salamon sayth that
as moghtes in the shep fles anoyeth
the clothes. & the smale wormes the
tres Right so anoyeth sorow the her-
te of a mā. wherfor vs ought as wel
in the deth of our chyldren as in the
losse of our goodes temporell haue
paciẽce. Remembryng on the pati-
ent Job. Whan he had lost his chil-
dren and his temporell goodes & had
endured many a ful greuous temp-
tacion. yet sayd he thus. Our lord
hath gyuen it to me. Our lord hath
berast hit me. right so as our lord
hath wold right so it is don. y blessed
be the name of our lord.

Of this forsayd thinges ans-
werde mellebeus to his wyf
prudence alle thy wordes ben
soth said he and therto prouffitable
But truly myn hert is trobelld with
this sorowe so greuously that I wo-
te not what to doo. Late al thy trewe
frendes sayd prudence & alle thy spy-
nage whiche that ben wise come vn-
to the. & telle to them your caas and
herken what thy say in counceylling
& gouern you after her sentence.

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Salamon saith wel: alle thy thinges by counceyl & thou shalt neuer repent. Than by cause of the counceyl of his wyf prudence. This Melibeus lete callen a grete congregacion of folke as Cirurgens. Phisicians: olde folke and yonge and some of his olde enemyes reconceyled as by theyr semblance to his loue & to his grace and there withall came somune of his neyghbours that dyd hym reuerence more for drede than for loue as it happeth ofte. There comen also many subtyl flateres and wyse aduocates lerned in the lawe. And whan thise folke to gyder assembled were. This Melibeus shewed to them in sorowful wyse his caas. And by the maner of his speche hit semed that in his herte he bare a cruel yre redy to do vengeance vpon his foos. and sodenly despyred that he shol begynne the warre. But neuer theles yet ayed he theyr counceyl vpon this mater. A cyrurgyn by licence and assente of suche as were wyse to se vp. And to Melibeus sayd as ye may here.

He sayd he as to vs Cyrurgens. hit apperteyneth þat we doo to euery wyght the best that we can doo. where as we be wythholden and to our patiente that we do no domynage. wherfor hit happeth many tyme and ofte. That whan two men haue the other wounded one Cyrurgyn heleth hem bothe. wherfore vnto our arte hit is not pertynent to norisse weite. ne

partyes to supporte. But certes as to the warpschyng & helyng of your doughter al be it so that she be peryllously hurt and wounded. we shal do ententys besydes fro day to day. that wyth the grace of god she shal be hool and sound as sone as possible is. Almost in the same wyse the phisicians answered saue that they sayden a fewe wordes moo. That lyke as maladyes ben cured by theyr contraries. right so shal men warpsche werre by pees. This sepyed frendes þat semed reconceyled and his flaterers made semblaunte of wepyng & compeyred and grutchid moche in this mater. Dreyfynge gretely melibeus of myght. of power of rycheesse and of frendes. dyspraysing the power of his aduersaries. and sayd vterly. þat he anone shold wite: whan hym on his aduersaries begynnyng warre. vp roose than an aduocate þat was wyse by leue and by counceyl of oþer that were wyse. And sayd lordynge for the nede whiche we ben assembled in this place is ful heuy thing and high mater by cause of the wronge and of the wyldrednes that hath ben don and elce by reson of the grete damages that in tyme comyng be possible to falle for the same. And elce by reson of the grete richesse and of the power of the partyes bothe. for the whiche hit were a ful grete peryll to erren in this mater. wherfor melibeus this is our entent. we counceyl you: about al thing that right anon thou do dyligence in slepyng of thy

propre persone in suche wyse þ þ thou
ne want none espye ne watche. thy
body for to saue. & after in thy hous
we counceylle that thou sette suffici-
ent garnyson so as they may as wel
thy body as thy hous defende. But
certes for to meue warre ne sodenly
for to do vengeance. we may not de-
me in so lytly tyme that hit shold be
proufftable wherfor we aye leyser
& space to haue delyberacion in this
caas to deme. for the comyn prouer
sayth thus he that sone demeth. sone
shal repente. and elre men say that. þ
Iuge is wyse þ sone vnderstondeþ
a mater and Jugeth by leyser. for
alle be it so that taryng be noyful.
As gates it is not to be reprovied in pe-
nyng of Iugement ne in vengeance
takynge whan it is sufficient & reso-
nable. And that shewed our lord ihu
cryst by ensample. for whan the wo-
man þ was taken in adhoutry was
brought in his presence to knowe what
shold be do of her personne. Al be it þ
he wyse welle hym self what he wold
do. yet ne wold he answer soudenly
but he wolde haue delyberacion. and
in the ground he wrote twyes. And
by this cause we aye delyberacioun
and we shal than by the grace of god
couceyl yow that thing that is most
profitable. Up starte than the
ponge folke attones & the most par-
te of this cōpanye haue scorned thys
olde wyse man and begonne to ma-
ke noyse and saiden Right so as whi-
le that yron is hote men sholde smite
Right so while that this thing is ful
she and newe shold men wiche her
wronges. And wyth a loude voyce

they cryden warre. warre. Up rose
then one of this olde wyse men. and
made contenaunce wyth his hande þ
men shold holde hem styl & yue hym
andpence. Lordpnyges sayd he ther is
ful many a man that cryeth warre
warre that wote full ytyl what war-
re amounteth. warre at his begyn-
nyng hath so grette an entre and soo
large þ euery wyght may entre whā
hym lyeth & spghely fynde warre.
But certes what ende that therof shal
falle it is not lyght to knowe. for so-
thly whan that warre is once begon
there is full many a childe vnbome
of his moder that shal dye and sicke
yong by cause of that warre or ellys
lyue in sorow or deye in wretchyd-
nesse. And thefor or ony warre begyn-
men must haue grette counceyl & gre-
te delyberacioun. And whan this olde
man wende to haue enforced his tale
by resons. wel nyghe attones began
they al tarise for to breke his tale and
bad ful faste his wordes tab:egge.
for sothly who so prechyth to them
that haue no luste to here his tale his
wordes or his sermon anoyeth them
for Ihesus sprak: sayth that musli-
re in wppnyng is a noyous thing. This
is as moche to saue. as moche away-
leth to speke before folke. to whom
his speche anoyeth. As it doth so sin-
ge before hym that wepeth. And whā
this olde man sawe þ he wanted au-
dience Al shamefast he sette hym dōn
agayn. for salamon saith. there as
thou mayst haue none audience. en-
force the not to speke. I see wel said
this wyse man þ the comyn prouerbe
is soth. That good couceyl wanteth

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whan it is moste nede.

Et had this mellebeus in
p his counceyl many folke
that prynciply in his ere cou-
ceylled hym certayn thynges & coun-
ceylled hym contrarie in general au-
dience. Whan Mellebeus sawe that
the gretest parte of his counceyl we-
re accorded that he shold make war-
re. anon he condescended to theyr cou-
ceyllyng and fully assented thei-
sentence.

p lord said prudence I you
m beseeche as herthelp as I da-
re & can ne haste you not
to faste. And for alle guerdons as
yeue me audience. For piers alsons
sayth. who so doth to the other good
or harme haste the not to acquyte it.
for in this wyse thy frende wyl aby-
de. and thy enemye shal the lenger
lyue in drede. The prouerbe sayth he
hastith wel that can abyde wysely. &
in wyched haste is no proffyt.

his Mellebeus answerde
t to his wyf prudence. I put
pose not sayd he to welre
by thy counceyl for many causes and
resons for certes euery wyght wold
holde me than a fool. this is to saye
yf I for thy counceyllyng wold cha-
nge thynges that ben ordeyned and as-
sented by so many wyse peple. Se-
condly I saye that alle women ben
wyched and none good of them alle.
for of a thousand men sayth salamo
I fonde one good. But of al women
certes good women fonde I neuer
noon. And also certes yf I gouerne

me by thy counceyl it shold seme that
I hade gyue to the ouer me the mas-
trey. And god forbede that it were so
for Ihesus xpyal sayth that yf thy
wyf hane the maystrey she is con-
trarious to her husbond. And sala-
mon sayth to thy wyf ne to thy chyld-
de ne to thy frende neuer in thy lyf ne
yeue power ouer thy self. for better
it were that thy chyldren aye of the
thynges that hem nedeth. than thou
se thy self in the hondre of thy chyld-
ren and certes yf I shold wold by
counceyllyng my counceyl must be
somtyme secret tyl it were tyme that
it muste be knowe. And this may
not be yf I shold be counceylled by
the. for women can kepe no counceyl

han dame prudence fulde
w bonapty and wyth grete
patience hade herde al that
her husbond lide for to say. tha aye
she of hym licence for to speke & sayd
in this wyse my lord sayd she as to
your first reson it may lightly be an-
swerd for I say that it is no solye to
chaunge counceyl whan the thyng
is chaunged or ellis whan the thyng
semet other wyse tha it was before
and more ouer I say though that ye
haue sworn and be hyght to per for
me your emprise. and by Iuss cause
ye da it not. men sholde not say ther
for that ye were a lyer ne for sworn.
for that booke sayth y the wyse man
maketh no lesyng whan he tomet
his corage to the better. And al be it
so that your emprise be establisshid
and ordeyned by grete multitude of

peple. yet dar ye not accompysshe þe
same ordenaunce but þow lile. for
the trouthe of thynges and the prof-
fyt be rather found in fewe folke that
ben wyse and full of reson than by
grete multytude of peple wher eny
mā claterith what þe him lyst. soþly
suche multytude of peple is not ho-
nest and to the second reson wher as
ye sayn that al women ben wycked
Haue your grace. certes ye despise al
women in this wyse. and he that all
despiseþ. al despiseþ as saith the bo-
ke. a schuler sayth who so wol haue
sappence shal no man dispryse. but
he shal gladly teche the science that he
can wythout presumption. or pryde.
And suche thynges as he can not. he
shal not be ashamed for to lerne hem
and enquire of lasse folke than hym
self. And that there hath ben many a
good woman. it may be prouyd. for
cryst wolde neuer descende for to be
borne of a woman. yf al womē had
be wycked. and after that for the gre-
te bounte that is in our lord ihu crist
whan he was risen from deth to lyf.
appered rather to a woman than to
his appostles. and though that sala-
mon said he fond neuer womā good
yet foloweth not therfor that al wo-
men ben wycked for thought he fon-
de no good woman certes many a
nother mā hath fonden many a wo-
man ful good. and ful trewe. or ellis
peraventure the intent of Salamon
was this that in souerayn bounte he
fond no woman. This is to say that
there is no wyght so good that he ne
wanteth som of the perfectiō of god

that is his malter.

Our thyrde reson is thys.
ye saye that yf ye gouerne
you be my counceyl it shol-
de seme that ye had yue me the maist-
rye and the lordship ouer your perso-
ne. Byre saue your grace. it is not so
yef it so were that noman shold be
councylled but only of hem that had
lordship and maistrie of his persone
Men wold not be counceylled so of-
te as they ben. for soþly that man þe
a yeth councyl of a. purpos. yet hath
he his fre choyse whether he wyl wer-
ke by that councyl or not. And as to
your fourth reson there that ye say þe
the Janglerye of woman can not hy-
de thynges that they knowe. as who
sayth a woman can not hyde þe shee
woot. Byre thysse wordes ben to
vnderstonde of women þe ben Jan-
glers and wycked of whiche wo-
men men say. that thre thynges dry-
uen a man sone out of his hous that
is to saye. smolre. droppynge of rayn
and wycked wyues. And of suche
women sayth Salamon. that it we-
re better to dwellen in deserte. than
wyth a woman that is ypotous. and
syt by your leue that am not I.
for ye haue ful ofte assayed my gre-
te spence and my grete patience.
And eke how wel I can hyden and
hede thynges that men ought secretly
to hyde. And soþly as to your
fyfthe reson wher that ye saye that
in wycked counceyl women bayn-
quisshe men. god wote that reson sta-
deth here in no stede. for vnder-
stonde now that ye aye counceyl to

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do wyftridues And yf ye wol welre
wickednes. And your wyf restray-
ne that wyftrid putpoos and ouer-
come you by reson and by good cou-
ceyl. Lettes your wyf ought rather
to be prayesd than to be blamed.

Thus shold ye vnderstode the philo-
sophre that wicked women bayn-
quisshe her husbondes And there as
ye blamen alle women and her re-
sons. I shalle shewe by ensample þ
they be good and prouffitable. Eke
somne men haue sayd that the cou-
ceyl of women is to dere. or ellis to
litel of prys. But al be it so þ many
women be bad. & her counceyl cupl
and nothing worth. yet haue men
founde ful many a good woman &
discrete and wyse in counceyllynge.
Lo Jacob be the counceyl of his mo-
der Rebecca whan the blessing of y-
saac his fader and the lordship ouer
al his brethern. Judith by her goode
counceyl despyered the crite of Bethule
in whiche he dwellyd out of the han-
des of olyphernes that had besieged
it and wold haue it destroyed. Abi-
gail deliuered Nabal her husbond
fro dauid the lyng that wolde haue
slayn hym And peesyd the pre of the
lyng by her wytte and by her good
counceyl. Hester by the counceyl
enchaunced greteþ the people of god
in the Regne of Assuerus the lyng
& sam the bouite in good counceyllynge
of many a good woman men may
telle. And eke more ouer whan our
lord god had made Adam our for-
mer fader. he sayd in this wyse. it is

not good man to be allon. make we
to hym an helpe semblable to hym
self to here may ye see that yf womē
were not good and her counceyl good
and prouffitable. Our lord god of
heuen wold neu haue wrought hem
ue cauld hem helpe of man but ra-
ther confusion of man. And the-
re sayd ones a clerke in two versys.
What is better thā Jaspas. wyfedom
And what is better than wyfedom:
woman & what is better than good
woman. no thyng. And so fyr by
mony other resons may ye see that
many women been good and their
counceyl good and prouffitable.

And therfor yf ye wol trust to my
counceyllynge I shal restore you your
doughter hool and soude. And eke
I wol do so moche that ye shalle ha-
ue honour in this caas. (Whan
melleker had herde the wordes of his
wyf Prudence. he sayd thus. I see
wel that the worde of Salamon is
soth: he saith that wordes that been
spolien discretely by ordinaunce ben
honprombes for they proue sweteness
to the soule & hollomnes to the body

By cause of thy swete wordes &
eke for I haue assayed and proued
thy grete sapience and thy grete trou-
the I wol gouerne me by thy coun-
ceyl in al maner thyng.

Now fyr sayd dame prudence. syn
ye voucheauf to be gouerned by my
counceyl I wol enforme you how
ye shal gouerne you in thesye of
your counceyl. First to fore al wer-
lys ye shal beseeche the hygh god þ

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he be your counceyl. & shapen you to follow the entent þat he geue you counceyl & confort. As to þe taught his sone at al tymes thou shalt please & praye him to dresse thy wayes. And soke that al thy counceyl be in hym for evermore.

Sapient Jame elze sayth. þat of you haue neede of sapience. Aye it of god. And after that than shal ye take counceyl in your self. And examyne wel your thoughtes of suche thinges as ye thynke that ben beste for your prouffyt. And than shal ye depue a way from your hertes tho thinges þat ben contrarious to good counceylle. this is to say. yre. couetyse. & hastynesse. first he that aveth counceyl of hym self. Certes he must be wythouten yre. for many causes. The firste is this þat he that hath grete yre and wrath in hym self. he weneth alway to do thyng that he may not do. and secondly he that is proude & wrathful may not deme wel. And he that may not deme wel may not wel counceyl. Another is this. he that is proude & wrathful as sayth Senek may not speke but blameful thynges. And wyth his viciuous wordes he stereth other folke to angre and to yre. And elze for ye must depue couetyse out of your herte for thapostle sayth that couetyse is the rote of alle harmes. And truste wel that a couetous man can not deme wel ne thynke but only to fulfille the ende of his couetyse and certes that may neuer be accomplished. for evermore the more he bewaunche a man hath of riches. the more he despyeth. And ye muste

also depue out of your herte hastynesse. for certes ye may not deme for the beste hasteli a sodeyn thought that falleth in your herte. Dyt ye muste auyse you an it ful ofte. for as ye herde to fore the comyn puerbe. whiche is this. he that sone demeth sone repenteth. Dyt ye be not alway in lyke dysposicion for certes somtyme suche thyng as semeth that is good for to do. Another tyme it semeth to you the contrarie. And whan ye haue take counceyl in your self and haue demed by good dysberacion suche thyng as semeth you beste. Than I counceyl you to kepe it secreete. And bewraye not your counceyl to ony person but þat it so be þat ye wene secretly þat through your bewraying your condicion shalle be to you the more prouffitable. for ihu crist sayth. nether to thy frende. ne to thy foe discover not thy secreete counceyl. ne thy folke. for they wyl geue the aydencc. folowing & supporting in your presence. And sowe you in your absence. Another clerke sayth that scarcely shalt thou fynde ony person that may kepe counceyl secretly. The boke sayth whyles þat thou kepest thy counceyl in thy herte. thou kepest it in thy pryson. & whan thou wrapest hit to ony wyght he holdeth the in his snare. And therefore it is better to hyde your counceyl in your herte. than praye hym to whom ye haue bewrayed your counceyl that he wold kepe it close & styll. for seneca sayth þat it be so that thou ne may thy counceyl

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hyde how darst thou pray ony other
wyght to hyde thy counceyl & receiue it
secrete. But yf thou wene silyently þ
thy betwraynyng of thy counceyl to a
persone wyl make thy redoucyon soun-
ding in the better plyght. than shalt
thou telle hym thy counceyl as in this
wyse. First thou shalt make no sem-
blance whether the were leuer pces
of wette or this or that ne shewe hym
not thy wyl. ne thyn entente for tust
te wel that comunly thysse counceyl-
lours ben flaterers namely the coun-
ceyllours of grete lordes. for they
enforce them alway rather to speke
playsaunt wordes enclynyng to the
lordes luste than wordes that ben tre-
we and prouffitable. And therfore
men sayn that the riche man hath sel-
den any good counceyl but yf he ha-
ue it of hem self. And after that thou
shalt considere thy frendes and thyn
enmyes. & as touchyng thy frendes
thou shalt consydere whiche of them
ben moste trewe wysest. most sayth-
ful. oldest and most approued in cou-
ceylling. And of hem shalt thou aye
thy counceyl as the caas requyret. I
say first þ þe shal clepe to your coun-
ceyl your frendes þ ben trewe. for sa-
lomon saith right as the herte of a
man despyteth in sauour that is swete
Right so the counceyl of trewe fan-
des yeueth sweteness to the soule. He
saith also there may no thyng to bee
splied to attrewe freude. for certes
gold ne syluer be not so moch worth
as the good wyl as the trewe frende
& the he saith þ a trewe frende is a
grete defense. who þ it fyndeth. cer-

tes he fyndeth a grete tresour than
shal þe eke vnderstonde yf þ your tre-
we frendes ben discrete and wyse for
the booke saith & þe alwey thy coun-
cil of them þ ben wyse & by this same re-
son shalle þe clepe to your counceyl of
your frendes þ ben of age whiche þ
haue seyn many thynges & ben ex-
pert in dyuers thynges. & be approued
in counceylling. for the booke saith in
olde men is the sapience & in longe ti-
me that prudence and celius saith. þ
grete thynges ben not ay accomplys-
shed by strength ne by dyspurtnes of
body. but by counceyl and by aucto-
ryte of persones and by science the
whiche thre thynges ne be not feble by
age. but cert. s they enforce and cu-
rre day by day. And than shal þe
clepe this for a generall rewe furte
shal þe clepe to your counceyl a fewe
or your frendes that ben speial for
salomon saith Many a frende haue
thou. but amonge a thousand chese
the one be thy counceyllour. for alse
be it so þ thou first telle thy counceyl
to fewe. Thou maist after telle thy
counceyl to mo folke yf it be nede. but
solke alway þ thy counceyllours haue
tho thre condicions þ I haue said be-
fore. þ is to saye that they be trewe.
wyse & of olde experience. And wete
not alway in euery nede by one cou-
ceyllour allone. for somtyme it bef-
ueth to be counceyllid by many. for
salomon saith. saluation of thynges
is there where be many counceyllours

Now sithe I haue tolde you of
whiche folke that þe shold bee coun-
ceyllid. Nowe wyl I telle whiche

The Last of Chaucer

counceyl ye shal eschewe. First ye shal eschewe the counceylling of folles. For Salamon sayth take noo counceyl of a fool for he ne can not counceyl but after his luste and his affection. The booke sayth that the properte of a fool is this. he troweth hat me lyghtly of every wyghte.

And lyghtly troweth al bouite in hym self. ye shal also eschewe the counceylling of flaterers such as enforce hem rather to prayse your persone by flattery than to telle you the sothfastnes of thynges. wherfore Tullius sayth. Amonge al the pestilences that ben in frendship the grettest is flattery. And therfor it is more nede to eschewe and drede flaterers than any other peple. The booke sayth thou shalt rather fle & drede the swete wordes of flaterers. and prayse than the egre wordes of thy frende þ sayth to the thy sothes. Salamon sayth that the wordes of a flaterer. is a snare to catche Innocentes he sayth also he that sayth to his frende wordes of swetnes and of plessaunce setteth a nette before his feet to catche hym & therfore sayth tullius Enclayne not thyn eres to flaterers ne take no counceyl of wordes of flattery. And caton sayth avyse the wel to eschewe wordes of flattery. of swetnes and of plessaunce. And elie thou shalt eschewe the counceylling of thyn olde enemyes that ben recounceyled. The booke sayth that no wyght retoweth in to the grace of his olde enemy as fauour. And ysaie sayth Ne truste not to them wyth whom thou hast

had warre or enemye. ne telle not he thy counceyl. And seneca telleth the cause why it may not be and sayth where as a grete fyre hath long tyme endured. that there ne dwelleth some vapour of warmnes. And therfore sayth salamon. In thyn olde foe truste thou neuer for truly though thyn enemye be recounceyled & maketh the chere of humylyte and soueth to the wyth his hede. ne truste hym neuer the more. For surely he maketh that feyned humylyte more for his owen prouffyt than for the loue of thyn owen persone. by cause he demeth the to haue victorie ouer his persone by suche fayned contenaille. The whiche victorie he myght not haue by stryf newarre. Peter alsons sayth make no felawship with thyn olde enemyes for yf thou do thy wyll putten it to wickidnes. & elie thou must eschewe the counceyl of such þ ben thy seruantes & benen the grete reuerence. For pauenture they save more for drede than for loue. & therfor sayth a philosophre in this wyse. Ther is no wight pfightly trewe to hym þ he sore dredeth. & tullius sayth there is no wight so grete as an emperour that long may endure but yf he hane more loue of his peple than drede. Thou shalt eschewe the counceyl of folle þ be dounfellewe for they can not couceyl hyde. For Salamon sayth there is no pryncipe where as repyneth diligence. ye shal alwaye haue in suspecte suche folle as counceylle you any thyng pryncely and counceylle you the contrarie openly.

Cassiodore saith that it is a maner sleight to hyndre whan a man sheweth to do one thing openly & wryteth the contrarie prively. Thou shalt also haue in suspect the counceylling of wyced folke. For the booke sayth that the counceyll of wyced folke is allewaye ful of fraude. And dauid sayth. That blyssful is þe man that hath not folowed the counceyll of wyced folke. Thou shalt also eschewe the counceylling of pong folke for her counceyll it not ryght.

Now syth I haue shewen
n wed yow alle this of whiche folke ye shal take your counceyll and of whiche folke ye shal eschewe theire counceyll. Now wol I telle you how ye shal examyne your counceyll. After the doctryne of Tullius in examynynge than of youre counceyllours. ye shal considere many thynges. Alderfirst thou shalt consydere. that in that thyng that thou art purposed and vpon what thyng thou shal haue counceyll that veray trouthe be sayd and conserved. This is to saye. telle al truly thy tale. For he that sayth fals. may not well be counceyllid in heaas of the whiche he syth. And after thys consydere thre thynges that accorde to that thou purposyst the first for to do by thy counceyllours yf reson accorde thereto. And also yf thy myght may atteyne thereto. And yf the more parte and the better parte of thy counceyllours accorde thereto or no. Than shalt thou consydere what thyng shal so

lowe of that counceylling as hate. pees. warre. grace. prouysyt. or damage. and many othe thynges. And of al thysse thynges thou shalt consydere of what rote is engendryd the mater of thy counceyll & what fruyt it may concerne & engendryn. Thou shalt consydere also alle the causes from whens they be sprongen. And whan ye haue examyned your counceyll as I haue said & whiche parte is the better and more prouysitable and haue approued by many wyse folke and othe. Than shalt thou consydere yf thou may performe it & make of hit a good cude for reson wolde not that ony man spold begynne a thing but yf he myght perfourme it as hym oughte. ne no mā shold take on hym so heuy a charge that he myght not bere it. For the prouerbe saith he þe to moche enbracheth distreyneth sytyl. And caton sayth also assaye to doo suche thynges as thou hast power to do. on lesse þe charge oppresse the tofore. And that the behoueth to weye that thyng that thou hast begonne. & yf that thou be in doubte whether thou may perfourme hit or not. These rather to suffre than to begynne. And peter also sayth. yf thou haste myght to doo a thyng whiche thou must repete. it is better nay than ye. This is to saye that it is better to holde thy tonge styll than for to speken. Than maist thou vnderstonde by stranger reson. þe yf thou hast power to pforme a werke. the whiche thou shalt repete. than it is better that thou suffre than begynne.

The Tale of Chaucer

Syn they that deseden euery wyght to assaye a thing of the whiche he is in doubte. whether he may performe it or noo. And after whan ye haue examyned your counceyl as I haue sayd beforne & knowe wel that ye may performe your emprise. confer me it than sadly til it be at an ende.

Now it is reson sayd she & in tyme that I shewe you whā and wherfore that ye may chaunge your counceyllours with outen reproof. Sothly a man may chaunge his counceyl or his purpos of the cause cresseth or whan an other cause begynneth for the lawe vpon thinges that newly betyde behoueth newe counceyl. And Seneca saith of that thy counceyl come to the eres of wickid men thyn enemyes chaunge thy counceyl. thou mayst also chaunge thy counceyl of so be that ther be errour or thou fynd ony other cause harme or donunage may betyde.

Also of thy counceyl be dishonest or ellis cometh of dishonest cause. chaunge thy counceyl. for the lawe sayth that al behestes that been dysshonest ben of no valwe. And eke of so be it be impossible or may not goodly be performed or leet. take this for a general reule that euery counceyl is affirmed so strongly that it may not be chaunged for no condicion may betyde I saye that yllre counceyl is wickid.

His mell-beus whā he herd the doctrine of his wyf dauntly prudence he answered in

this wyse. Dame sayd he as yet in to this tyme ye haue couenably taught me as in general now I shal gouerne me in chesynge & wythholdynge of my counceyllours But now wold I sayn that ye wold condescende especial & telle me how spelieth or what semeth you by your counceyllours how we haue chosen in our present nedes.

My lord sayd she I beseeche you in alle humbleste that ye wyl not wyllfully replie ayenst my reson. ne distempere your herte though I speke thing that you displese for god wote that is not my entente. I speke it for your beste. for your honour & profit eke And sothly I hope that your benygnyte wyl take it in paryere. that your counceyl as in this chas ne shold not as to speke properly be callid a counceylling but a moupcion or a meuyng folke in whiche counceyl ye haue erred in the assemblyng of your counceyllours for ye shold first haue clep'd a fewe folke to your counceyl. & after that ye myght haue shewed it to moo folke of it had be nede. But certes ye haue sodenly cleped to your counceyl a grete multitude of peple ful chargetaunt and ful anopous for to here

And ye haue erred for there as ye sholde haue cleped to your counceyllours your trewe frendes olde and wyse. ye haue cleped straunge folke. fals and flaterars and enemyes recounceyllid and folke that doon now reuerence wythout loue.

The Tale of Chauncer

And also ye haue erred for ye haue brought wpyth you pr. couerpyse and hastynes. the whiche thre thinges be contraryous to euery honest counceyl & proffyttable. & whiche thre thinges ye haue not amenued ne destroyed nether in your self ne in your counceyllours as ye ought ye haue erred also for ye haue shewed to your counceyllours your talent & your affection to make warre anon and for to doo vengeance. They haue aspyed by your incyng to what thyng ye be inclyned. & therfor haue they counceylled you rather to your talent thā to your prouffyte. ye haue erred also for you seyneth that it suffysyth you to haue be counceylled by thysse counceyllours only & wpyth lypyl a wyse. where as in so grete nede & so hye hit had be necessarye mo counceyllours And more deliberacion to performe your empyse. ye haue erred also for ye haue not examyned your counceyl in the forsayd mater ne in dede manere as the caas requireth. ye haue erred for ye haue made no dyuysion bytwyxe your counceyllours. This is to saye Bytwene your frendes & your feyned counceyllours ne ye haue not knowe the wysse of your frendes olde & wyse. But ye haue cast alle her wordes in an hutchepot. & inclyned your herte to the more parte & to the gretter nombre & by you descended And also ye wote wel that men shal alway fynde a gretter parte of nombre of foolles than of wyse men. And therefore the counceyllers be byn at congregacions & multitude

of folle there as men taken more rewarde to the nombre thā to the sapience of persones. ye see wel þ in suche counceyllinges folles haue the masterye.

Ellebeus answerde agayn

m I graunte wel I haue erred

But there as thou hast tolde me here befor þ he is not to blame that chaungeth his counceyl in certayn caas & for certayn Just causes I am alle redy to chaunge my counceyllours right as thou list & as thou wylt deuyse. the prouerbe sayth þ for to doo synne is manusshe. but certes for to pseuere long in synne it is a werl: e of the deupll.

O this sentence answerd dauid me prudence & said examyne your counceyl & lete vs se whiche of them haue spoken most resonable & taught you best counceyl. & for as moche as the examination is necessarye late vs begyn at surgens & at physiciens þ first spoken in this matere. I say you þ the surgens & the physiciens haue said you discretly as they ought. for they said ful wysely þ to the offite of hem hit appertayneth to do to euery wyght honour & prouffite & no wyght to crumpe. & after thercraft do grete diligēce vnto the cure of hem the whiche they haue in gouernance. & spt right as they haue answered wysely & discretely. right so I rede you þ the y be hyghly & souerainly gwerdonned for her noble speche. & the for they shold do the more curtyf besynes in the curacion of youre daughter. for alle be it so þ they be your frendes Therfor: shal ye not suffer þ they shal serue you for nought

But ye ought to gouerne hem a she
we hem largesse. And as touchyng
that the phisiciens entrespyn in thys
cas that is to say þ in maladies one
contrarpe is warpysshed by another
contrarpe I wold sayn knowe how
ye vnderstonde that teryte a what is
your sentence. Certes sayd mellebe-
us I vnderstonde that in this wyse
That right as they haue doon me a
contrarpeous right. ryght so shold I
do hem another. for right as they
haue venged hem on me a doon. as
wronge. right so shold I venge me
on hem a do hem wronge and than
haue I cured one contrarpe by ano-
ther contrarpe Lo said dame purdece
how lightly is euery mā enclyned to
do his owen desir a his owen plesyre
ctes said she the wordes of þ phisiciens
shold not be vnderstode in this wyse
for certes wychednes is not contrari-
ous to wychednes. ne vengeance to
vengeance no wrong to wrong but
cuerliche of them entrespyn a aggre-
gyn other But certes the wordes of
the phisiciens shold be vnderstode
in this wise. for good a wychednes be
two contrarpeous. and pees a warre
Begeance a sustenance and discorde.
a accorde. and many other thinges.
But certes wychednesse shal be wari-
shed by goodnes. And discorde by ac-
corde. a warre by pees. a so forth by
other thinges. a hereto accordeth saint
Poule thapostle in many places.
He saith yelden of harme to harme ne
wyched speche to wyched speche but
do wel to hym that doth the harme
and blysse hym that saith the harme.

And in many other pla-
ces he saith a amonesteth pees and
accorde. But now wold I speke to
you of the counceyl whiche þ was
yeue to you by the men of lawe and
wyse folke that saiden alle by one ac-
corde as ye haue herde. that ouer all
thinges ye shold doo diligence to kee-
pe your persone a to warnstore your
hous And sayden also þ in this cas
ye ought for to werke ful aduysedly
a wyth grete discrecion a despyberand
And syre as to the first poynte that
toucheth the slepyng of your person
ye shal vnderstonde that he þ hath
warre Shalle euermore deuoutly a
meekly beseechen a prayen before alle
thinges Ihesu cryste of his mercy þ
he wol haue hym in his protection a
be his souerayn helper at his nede.
for certes in thys werke there is no
wyght that may be counceylled ne
slepte sufficiently wythout the slepyng
of our lord Ihesu cryste. To this en-
tente accordeth the prophete dauid þ
saith yf god ne slepe the Lyte. in ydel
walketh he that slepeth it. Now syre
than shul ye comynge the slepyng
of your persone to you trewe fren-
des that ben y prouyd and knowen
And of them shal ye aye helpe your
persone to slepe. for Laton saith yf
thow haue nede of helpe aye it of thi
frende. And after this than shalle ye
slepe you from al straunge folkes a
frolers and haue alleway in sus-
pecte her companye. for Peter
apostle saith ne take no companye
by the waye of stranger men.

But yf it so be þ thou haue knowen
 hem before tyme And yf so be that ye
 haue not knowen hem. And wyl ne-
 des fal in thy compaignye perauentre
 wythout thy assente. enquire then
 as subely as thou canst or mayst of
 his conuersacion & of his lyf before.
 And sayne thy way & say that thou
 wolt go thider as thou wolt not go
 And yf he bere a spere holde the on
 the right syde. And yf he bere a swer-
 de holde the lyste syde And after thus
 than shal ye lyepe yow wylfuly from
 al suche maner peple as I haue said
 before & hem and her counceyl esche-
 we. And after this than shal ye lyepe
 yow in suche maner þ for ony pre-
 sumpsyon of your strengthe. that ye
 despise ne attempte not the might of
 your aduersarye. And thus beware
 þ ye lette not the lyeppynge of your per-
 sone for ony presumption. for euery
 wyse man dredeth his enemye. And
 salomon sayth wylful is he þ of noo-
 thing hath drede. for certes he that
 thorough the hardynes of his herte or
 of hym self hath to grete presumpti-
 on shal cruel betyde. than shal yow
 euery more contrewayte enbusshment
 tis in speciall. for seculer sayth the
 wyse mā that dredeth harmes esche-
 we. harmes ne he fallith no peill þ
 peill eschewith. & al be it so þ thou se-
 me þ thou be in silyer place. yet shalt
 thou do al way diligence in lyeppynge
 of thy persone not only from thy gre-
 test enemyes but from the lesse ene-
 mye. Dwyde sayth that the lytyl we-
 spyl wold sle a grete hulle & the grete
 herte. And the booke sayth. That a ly-

tyl thorne may prycke the lyeunge sul-
 fore. And an honde wyl sle the wylde
 bore but neuertheles I saye not that
 thou shalt be so coward that thou
 doubte. wher as is no drede. The
 booke sayth that som folke haue gre-
 te lust to desceyue but yet they drede
 hem to be desceyued. thou shalt drede
 to be enpossoned. and lyepe the from
 the compaignye of scorners for the
 booke sayth scornes maketh no compa-
 ny.

But flee her wordes
 as benyng. Now as to the secounde
 poynt wher as your wyse counceyl-
 lours conceyved yow to warnstoure
 your hous wyth grete dyslignie I
 wold sayn knowe how that ye un-
 derstonde the wordes & what is the
 sentence. Wellibecus answerd & sayd
 Certes I vnderstonde it in this wy-
 se that I shalle warnstoure my hous
 wyth tounes suche as be castelles &
 other maner edyfices wyth armure
 and other maner artylerye by suche
 thinges whiche I may my persone &
 my hous so dede þ my enemyes shal
 be in drede my hous for to approche.

This sentence answerde a
 non prudence. warnstourynge
 sayth she of grete towres &
 edyfices wyth grete costages & grete
 traual. And whan that they be ac-
 complysshed yet be they not worth a
 strawe. But yf they ben defended by
 trewe frendes that ben olde and wy-
 se. And vnderstonde wel that the gre-
 test and strongest garyson that a ri-
 che man may haue as well to lyepe
 his persone as his good. is that he
 be besourde wyth his subgettyes and

The Tale of Chaucer

For thus saith tully⁹ þ there is a ma-
 ner garrison þ no mā may gainquis-
 she ne discōfite. & þ is a lord to be be-
 louyd of his cytefens & of his peple.
 Now for as to your thirde point
 where as your wyse & olde counceyl-
 lours sayd þ ye ne ought not sodenli-
 ne hastily to procede in this nede but
 þ ye oughten to putreue & apparay-
 len in this caas wyth grete diligence
 & grete deliberation truly I trowe
 they sayden right wyself & right so. þ
 For tully⁹ saith in eueri nede er thou
 begynne yet apparayl the wyth gre-
 te diligence thā in vengeāce talynge
 in warre in bataile & i warnstoring
 er thou begynne I rede þ thou appa-
 raylle the thereto & do it wyth grete de-
 liberation For tully⁹ saith þ long ap-
 parayling before the bateyl maketh
 short victorie And cassiodore saith þ
 the garrison is the stronger whan it
 is longe tyme aduersed But now late
 be speke of the counceyl þ was ac-
 corded by your neyghebouris suche
 as don you reuerence wythouten so-
 ue. your olde enemyes recounspired.
 your flaterers þ counceyl you certayn
 thinges openly. And pryuelly counceyl
 you the contrarie. The pong folle þ
 countreyllē you to auenge you & ma-
 ke warre anon. Certes for as I ha-
 ue sayde before. ye haue gretefully erred
 to haue cleped suche maner of folle
 to your counceyl. which counceyllours
 ben ynough reprevyd aforesayd by
 reason. But neuertheles late be nou-
 descende to the speerpall. ye shal first
 procede after the doctrine of tullyus.
 Certes the trouthe of this matere o:

of this counceyl nedeth not be pilygently
 enquire. For it is wyse wyl & whiche
 they be þ haue don to you. This tres-
 paas & bylonpe and how many tres-
 passours. & in what maner þ they ha-
 ue do to you alle this wrotyge & alle
 this bylonpe. And after this shal ye
 examyne the f. cond condicion. whiche
 the þ the same tullyus addeth in this
 same mater. For tullyus putteth a
 thing whiche þ he calleth cōsenting.
 this is to say who ben they & whiche
 be they & how many consenting to
 this counceyl in thy wylfulnes to doo
 hastily vengeāce. And lete cōsider. al-
 so who be they & how many be they
 þ cōsenteden to your aduersaries. &
 certes as to the first point it is well
 knowen whiche folle they be that cō-
 sented to your hastily wylfulnes. For
 certes alle tho that counceyllēd you
 to make sodeyn warre be not your
 frendes Lete be now consydere whiche
 be they þ ye holde so gretefully your
 frendes as to your persone. For al be
 it so þ ye be so myghty & riche Lates
 ye be but allone. For ye haue no chil-
 dre but a daughter. Ne ye haue noo
 brethern ne cosyns Germans ne no-
 ne other nyghelepyntede. wherfor þ
 your enemyes for drede sholde stynt
 to plete with you or distroyen your
 persone. ye know also þ your ryches
 must be despended in dyuerse par-
 tes & whan þ euery wyght hath his
 parte they ne wyl take but lytyl re-
 warde to venge your deeth.
 But your enemyes ben thre and they
 haue many children. Brethern

Cosyns. And other nyghe lymrede. And though so were that thou haddest slayn two or thre of them. yet dwellen there ynough to wrecchen her deth and to flee thy persone. And though so be that poure lymrede be more splicet and stedfast than the lymrede of your aduersaries. yet neuertheless poure lymrede nys but after lymrede they be but lypyl subget to you. And the lymrede of your enemyes ben nyghe sybbe to them. And certes as in that her condycion is better than yours. Than lete vs considere also yf that the counceyl of hem that conseil you to take sodeyn vengeance wheter it accord to reson or noo. And certes ye know wel nay for as be right or reason there may no man take vengeance on no wyght but the Iuge that hath the Jurisdiction of it. Whan it is graunted hym to take that vengeance hastily or at temperatly as the lawe requirith. And yet more ouer of that word that Tullius sayth and sleped cōcentyng thou shalt consydere yf thy myght & thy power may consente and suffyse to thy wylfulnes and to thy counceylsoure. & ctes thou maist wel say nay for slyctly as for to speke properly we may doo no thing but only suche thynges as we may do rightfully. And certes thou mayst rightfully take vengeance. as of your propre auctorite. Than may ye se that your power ne consenteth ne accordeth your wylfulnes. Lete vs examyne the thyrd point that tullius clepeth con-

sequent. thou vnderstonde þ the vengeance that thou purposest to take is consequent. And therfor foloweth a nother vengeance peyl and warre and other damages wythout nobre of whiche we be not warre as at this tyme. and as touchyng the fourthe parte þ tullius clepeth engendring Thou shalt consydere þ this wrong whiche is don to the. is engendryd of the hate of thy enemyes & of vengeance talyng vpon him the wold engendre a nother vengeance & moche sorowe and wasyngge of riches as I sayd before. Now syt as to the fyfthe point. whiche that tullius clepeth causes whiche is the last point thou shalt vnderstonde þ this wrong that thou hast receyued hath certain causes whiche that clerkes clepen or tyens and effyience & causa lēguina and causa propyria. This is to saye the set cause & the nygh cause. The set cause is alle myghty god þ is cause of alle thynges. The neer cause is thy thre enemyes. The cause accidental was hate. The cause materpalle is the syue woundes of thy doughter. The cause formal is the cause of her workyng þ brouhten ladders and ascenden in at the wyndowes. These cause synal was to sle thy doughter it lettid not in as moche as in hem was. But for to speke of this synal cause as what ende they shal come or what shal synally betyde of him in this caas. Ne can I not deme but by comectyng & supposyng for we shal suppose that

they shal come to a wylled ende. by
cause that the boke of the decrees saith
Seide or wyth grete payn he causes
brought to a good ende. whan they
be bodily begonne. Now syre ys men
wold aye me why that god suffreth
men to do this vylounye certes I can
not wel answer as for no sothfastnes
for thapostle saith. That the scienc
ce and the Jugementys of our lord
god almyghty been ful depe. There
may no man comprehend ne sette
hem sufficently. Neuertheles by cer
tain presumptuous & coniectyng I
holde and beleue that wyght that is
ful of Justice and rightfulesse hath
suffryd this to betyde by Just cause
& resonable. Thy name is mellebe.
This is to saye a mā that dymlyeth
hony. thou hast droule so moche ho
ny of swete temporel riches and desy
res of honour of this worlde þ thou
art droule & hast forgotten Ihu crist
thy creatour. Thow ne hast doon to
hyin suche honour and reuerence as
thow oughtest. Ne thou ne hast take
kepe of the wordes of Dyd þ saith
Vnder the hony of the goodes of the
body is hyd venym that sleth the sou
le. And salamon saith ys thou hast
founde honye etc of it that suffyseth.
for ys thou etc of it out of mesure.
thou shalt sprewe. and be nedye and
poure. and paraunture Crist hath
the inde spye. & hath torneth a way
fro the his face and his misericorde.
And so he hath suffrid that thou hast
be pynnysshed in the maner that how
hast trespassed. Thow hast don syn
ne agayn our lord Ihesu crist. for

certes the thre enemyes of manlyne
de that is to saye the flesche the fende
and the wold thou hast suffryd hem
for to entre in to the herte wylfullye
by the wyndowes of thy body. And
hast not defendeth thy self sufficient
ly agaynst her assautes & her temp
tations. so that they haue wounded
the soule in fyue places that is to sa
ye the dedely synnes that been entred
in to thy herte be the fyue wyttes.
And in this maner our lord ihu crist
hath suffred that thy thre enemyes be
entryd in to thy hous by the wyndo
wes. And haue wounded thy dought
er in the maner asofsayd.

Certes sayd Mellebe I see
wel þ þe enforce pow my
lyf by wordes to ouerto
me me in suche maner as I shal not
venge me of myn enemyes. she wyng
meth the petyl & the euyl that myght be
falle of this vengeance. But who
so wold consydere in alle vengeance
res the petil and the euyl that myght
sewe of vengeance takyng a man
wold neuer take vengeance and þ
were harme for by vengeance ta
kyng ben wylled men desseruid fro
the good men. And they that haue
wyl to do wyllednes restreyn her
wylled purpoos whan they see the
pynnyssyng and the chastysyng of the
trespassours And yet saye I more. þ
right as by synfuler presumption
he synneth in takyng vengeance of
a nother man Right soo synneth the
Juge ys he take not & doo vengean
ce on hem that it haue deseruid.

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Senekke saith thus. That mapster is good he sayth that reprevyth shrewes. And cassiodore sayth a man dredeth to doo outragiously whan he woot and knoweth that it dyspleaseth the Juges and soueraynes. and another sayth The Juge that dredeth to doo right maketh shrewes. A saint poule thapostle sayth how he wyrteth to the romayns that the Juges bere not the spere wythout cause But they bere it to punyssh the shrewes and mysdoers. And for to defend the good men. yf ye wyl take vengeance on your cunyes ye shall retourne and haue your corts to the Juge that hath the Iurysdiction vpon hem and ye shal punyssh hem as the lawe ayed & requyeth.

Sayd Wellesbe this vengeance spaketh me no thyng.

I bethynke me now & take hede how that fortune hath norisshyd me fro my chyldehode and holpe me to passe many a straunge paas Now wol I assaye in her trowynge wyth goddes helpe that shal me saue for to venge. certes sayd prudence yf ye wyl werke by my counceyl ye shal not assaye fortune by no waye. ne ye shalle not lene ne borwe vnto her after the worde of senekke. For thynges that ben folysh don and that bee doon in hope of fortune shal neuer come to good ende. And as to the same senekke sayth the more clete and the more shynnyng that fortune is. the more brotyl. and the sonner broken she is.

Truste ye

not in her. For there nys no stedfastnes ne stablenes in her. For whan thou trowest to be moste sure and lykly of her. She wyl faylle and deceyue the. And where as ye sayn fortune hath norisshyd you in your chyldehode. I say that there is so mykyl the laste truste in your witte. For senekke sayth what man that is norisshyd by fortune she maketh hym a fool. Now sythen ye despyen & avenge vengeance. And the vengeance that is doon after the lawe and before the Juge lyketh not you. And the vengeance that is doon in hope of fortune is perpyous and vncertain. than haue ye no remedye but for to haue your corts vnto the squerayn Juge that vengeyth al vysonyes & wronges. and he shal venge you after hym self wyntresseth wher as he saith. leue ye the vengeance vnto me and I shalle do hit.

Ellebet answerd yf I venge me not of the vysonye þ men haue don vnto me I sommon and warne hem that haue don to me this vysonye and al othere to doo me vysonye. for it is a vyson yf thou takest no vengeance of a old vysonye. thou somonest thy aduersarye to do the a newe vysonye. Also for my suffraunce men wolde doo me so grete vysonye þ I myght not bere it ne syfeyne it & then shold I be put & holde ouer lowe. For men sayn in mykyl suffring shal many thynges falle vnto the whiche thou ne shal now suffer.

and Jugement & in the myght and power of his enemyes. For salamo sayth Belue me and geue credence to that I shal saye. ne geue neuer the power ne gouernance of thy gooddes. to the sone. to thy wyf. to thy frende ne to thy broder. ne geue thou myght ne maystrye ouer thy body whi lest thou lyuest. Now sayth that he defendeth that a man shold not geue to his broder ne to his frende the myght of his body by a strenger reason he defendeth a man to geue hym to his enemye And neuertheles I couceyl you þe ye mystrust not my lord. For I wote wel and knowe verrey that he is debonaire. meke. large and curteis and nothyng desprous ne couetous of good ne riches. For ther is no thing in this worlde þe he despryth more than worship and honour.

Forthermore I knowe and am full sure that he nothyng shal doo in this dede wythout my counceyl. And I shal so werke in this cas that by the grace of our lord god ye shal be recounceylled vnto vs. Than sayd they wyth one voys. worshipful lady we put vs & our goodes in youre wyl and disposition alle fully. And be redy for to come what day that it lyke to your noblesse to assygne vs for to make our obligations & bondes also stronge as it shal lyke vnto your goodnes that we maye fulfyll the wyl of you & of my lord. Melebece. whan dame prudence had herd the answers of thysse men. She bad hem retorne pryncely. And she retorned agayn to her lord melebece & tolde

de hym how she fonde his aduersaryes ful repentant knowlechynge ful lowly her synnes and trespasses And how that they were redy to suffer all payne requyrynge hym of mercy and pyte. Than sayd melebece he is well worthy to haue pardon and forpynnes that excuseth hym not of his synne. But knowlecheth and repenteth hym appynge Indulgenue for his synne. Senke sayth There is the recompensoun and forpynnes. For the confession is nyghbour to Innocence. And therfor: I assente and conforme to haue pees. But it is good that we doo not wythout the wyl of oure frendes.

Than was Prudence ryght glad & Joyeful and sayde to respyte ye haue wel and goodly a word. For right as by the counceyl assente & helpe of youre frendes ye haue styrred to doo vengeance and make warre ryght so wythouten her counceyl shalle ye not accorden ye haue pees wyth youre aduersaryes. For the lawe sayth there is no thyng so good by waye of synne as a thyng to be vnboude by hym that it was boude. And than dame Prudence wythout delaye or tarpeng sent anon her messagers for her kyn and her olde frendes whiche were trewe and wyse. And tolde hem by ordre in presens of melebece al this mater as is aboue expresse and declared. And prayed hem that they wolde saye her aduys and counceylle what were beste to doo in this nede. And whan

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we thynke and consydere þ we haue
deserued to haue them. & saynt Gre
gory sayth. that whan a man consy
dereth wel the nombre of his defaul
tes and synnes. the paynes and try
bulacions that he suffreth senen the
lasse to hym. & in as moche as hym
thynketh his synnes more heuy and
griuous in so moche semeth his pay
ne more lyghter and esyer to hym.
Also ye oughten to ensp. and bo
we your herte to take the patience of
our lord Ihu cryste as sayth saynt
Peter in his epystles. Ihesu Cryste
he sayth that suffred for vs and gaf
ensample to euery man to folowe &
sue hym. for he dyd neuer synne. Ne
neuer cam ther out of his mouth by
leynes worde. whan men cursid hym
he cursed hem not. And whan men
beten hym. he manased hem not. al.
so the grete patience þ sayntes whi
che that ben in paradysse haue had in
trybulacions that they haue suffred
wythouten her deserte or gylte ought
moche styrre your patience. For ye
shold enforce you to haue patience.

Consyderynge the trybulacions of
this world that lytyl whyle enduren
and sone passyn and goon. and the
Joye that a man seketh by patience
in trybulacions is perdurable. After
that the Apocalypsa sayth in his epist
le. The ioye of god he sayth is perdu
rable last is to saue euerlastynge. also
trowe ye wel and eke beleeue stedfast
ly that he is not wel norisschyd ne wel
taught that wyl not haue patience.
ne wyl not receyue patience. for sa

lamen sayth That the doctryne of a
man and the wytte is known by
patience. And in another place he
sayth þ he that is patyēt gouerneth
hym by grete in prudence. & the same
Salamon sayth The angry and the
wrauthfulman maketh noyses. And
the patient man attempreth hym &
stylleth hym. he sayth also. it is more
worth to be patient thencefor to be
right stronge. And he that may haue
the lordship of his owen hert is more
to prayse than by his force or siren.
the taketh grete cyters. And therfore
saith saint Jame in his epistle That
patience is a grete vertue of p. rfect
cion. Certes sayd Welleber I graun
te dame Prudence that patience is a
grete vertu of perfection. But
euery man may not haue the perfec
cion that ye seke. ne I am none of þ
nombre of right perfight men. For
my herte may neuer be in pees vnto
the tyme that it be vengyd & al be it
soo that it was grete peryl to myn e
nemyes to doo me a vyloupe in ta
kynge vengeance vpon me: yet toke
they no hede of the peryl but fulfyll
ed their wycked wyl and corage.
And therfor me thinketh men ought
not to repreue me. though I put me
in a lytyl peryl for to venge me.
And though I do a grete cyressle.
That is to saie that I a venge one
outrage by a noth. r.

Sayde dame prudence ye
a say your wyll as you sy
keth But in no caas of the

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world of a man shold not do outrage ne eyresse for to venge hym. For casspoder saith that as cupl doth he that a beugeth hym by outrage as he that doth the outrage. And therfor ye shal venge pouw after the ordie of right. þis is to say by the lawe. not by eyresse ne by oultrage. & also if ye wil venge pou of the oultrage of youre aduersaries in other maner. ye sur ne. & therfor sayth senek þa mā shal neu benegshredwones by shredwones and yf that ye saye that right ayed a man to defende byolence by byolence. and feghtyng by feghtyng. Certes ye saith soth. whan the defence is doon anon wythouten interual or wythouten taryeng or delay for to defende hym and not for to venge hym. And yet behoueth that a man put suche temperaunce in his defence that men haue no cause ne mater to reproche hym that defendeth hym of oultrage or eyresse. For ellys we re it agayn reson. Parde ye knowe wel that ye make no defence as nou for to defende pouw. but for to venge pouw. And so sueth it that ye haue. io wyl to do your wyl attempterly. And therfor me thynketh that patience is good. For salamon sayth. þ he that is not patient shal haue grete harme.

Ertes said mellebe I graunte pouw whan a man is impatient and wroth of that whiche touched hym not & that apperteyneth not to hym. though it harme hym it is no wonder. For the lawe saith that he is culpable that entemprerly or medleth of thyng that

apperteyneth not to hym. And salamon saith. That he that entemprerly hym of the noyse of stryf of another man. Is lyke to hym that taketh a strange hound by the eeres. For right as he that taketh a strange hound by the eeres. he is otherwhyle biten with the hound. Ryght in the same wyse. it is reson that he haue harme that by his Impacience medlyth hym of the noyse of another mā where as it apperteyneth not to hym. But ye knowe wel that this dede that is to say my grief and my desire toucheth me ryght nygh. and therfore though I be wrothe and Impacient it is noo meruayl. And sayyng your grace I can not see that I shold grette þat harme me though I toke vengeance.

For I am riche & more myghty than myn enemyes ben and it is wel known that by money and hauyng grete poressouns ben al thynges of this world gouerned. And also salamon sayth that alle thyse thynges obeyen to money. whan prudence had herde her husband a balaue hym of his riches and of his money dyspraying the power of his enemyes she spak and sayd in this wyse. certes dere sye I graunte pouw that ye be riche and myghty. And that riches ben good to hem that haue gotten hem wel and that wel can vse them. for ryght as the body of a man may not lyue without the soule. nomore may the lyf without temporel goodes And by riches may a man gete hym grete frendes. and therfore sayth pamphylus yf an erles daughter be ryche he

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sayth she may these of a thousand men whom she wol aue to her husband. For of a thousand men on e wol not forsake her. And this pamphyles sayth also. yf that thou be ryght happy that is to saye yf thou be ryche thou shalt fynde a grete nombre of felawes and frendes. And yf thy fortune chaunge farewel frenshipp and felawshipp for thou shalt be alone wythout ony compaignye. But yf it be the compaignye of poure folke. & yet saith this pamphyles more ouer that they that ben bonde and thrall of synage shal be made worthy and noble by riches. And right so as by riches there comen many goodes. right so by pouerte there comen many harmes and euyls. And therfor depeth casspodre pouerte the moder of rypne that is to saye the moder of ourthtrowyng o: of fallynge down And therfore sayth Peter alsons one of the gretest aduersyteys of this world is whan a freman of Lynde o: of byrthe is constreyned by pouerte to ete the almesse of his cunye. And the same sayth Innocence in one of his bookes that sorowful and myshappy is the condycion of a poure beggar. For yf he aye not his mete. he dyeth for hounge & yf he aye he dyeth for shame. and algate necessity constreyneth hym to aye. And therfor sayth salamon That better it is to dye than to haue suche pouerte. And as the same Salamon sayth better it is to dye a bytter deth than to spue suche a lye. By these resons þ

I haue sayd vnto you and by many other that I coude say I graunte that riches be good to them that gete hem wel and to tho that vse wel this riches. And therfor wol I shewe you. how ye shal behaue you in gadryng of your riches. & in what maner ye shal vse them. fyrst ye shal gete hem wythouten grete desyre by good leyzer so kyngly and not ouer hastily. For a man that is to desyre in getyng riches haboundeth hym first to thefte and to alle other mysrewles. And therfor sayth salamon he that hasteth hym to besy to waye riche he shal be none Innocent He sayth also that the riches that hastily cometh to a man soon and hastily goth and passeth from a man. But that riches that cometh lypyl & lypyl weyt alway and mystryeth And therfor ye shalle gete riches by your wyte and by your trauct vnto your prouffyt. And that wythouten wrong o: harme doyng to any other persone. For the lawe saith ther maketh no man hym self riche yf he doo harme to another wright. This is to saye that nature defendeth and forbedeth by ryght that no man make hym riche vnto the harme of any other persone. And tidrus sayth that no sorowe ne dred of deth ne of thinge that may befall vnto a man is so moche agayn nature as a man to encrece his owen prouffyt to the harme of another man. & though þ grete and myghty men gotte riches more lyghtly than thou. yet shalt thou

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alle wyse fle ydleness for salamon
sayth That he that traucth in ydle-
nes tethed a man to doo many cuples
les. And the same salamon sayth. He
that traueyleth and bespeth hym to
tylle his lond shal ete b. ede. And he
that is ydle and casteth hym to noo
besynes ne occupation shal falle in
to pouerte & dye for hungre. And he þ
is ydle & slowe can neuer fynde coue-
nable tyme for to doo his prouffyt.
For ther is a Bersepar sayth. that the
ydle man excuseth hym in wynter
by cause of the grete colde & in som-
mer by excuson of hete. For thysse
causes sayth caton wasteth & enuyl-
neth pou not ouer mykyl to slepe.
For ouer moche reste norysshith and
causeth many byces. & therfor sayth
Seint Ierome doth some good des-
des þ the deuyll whiche þ is your ene-
mye fynd you not vnoctupied. For
the deuyll taketh not lyghtly to his
worshyping suche as he fyndeth occupi-
ed in good werke. Than thus in ge-
tyng of riches pe must flee ydleness
And after ward pe shal vse the riches
whiche pe haue gotten by your wytte
& by your trapueyl in suche maner þ
men hold pou not to scarce ne to spa-
ryng ne to fool large that is to saye
ouer large a spender. For right as
men blame an auaricious man by
cause of his scarfenes & chyncepe. in
the same wyse is he to blame þ spen-
deth ouer largely. And therfor
caton saith vse thy ryches that thou
hast gotten in suche maner as men
haue no mater ne cause to say ne cal

le the neyther wretche ne chynce. for
it is a grete shame to a man to haue
a poure hette & a riche purse. He saith
also the goodes that thou hast gotten
vse them by mesure þ is to say spend
them mesurably for they that folysly
spende & wasten the goodes that they
haue. whan they haue nomore pro-
pre of theyr owen. they shapen them
to take the goodes of other me. I say
than that pe shal flee auarice bysping
your rychesse in suche maner that
men sape not that your rychesse is
deuoured. But that pe haue them in
your myght & in your weldyng. for
the wyse man repreueth the auarici-
ous man and sayth thus in two ver-
ses. wherto and why burpeth a man
his owen goodes by his grete auarice
& knoweth wel þ nedes must he die
for deth is the ende of eueryman as
in this present lyf. & for what cause &
excuson Iopneth or knytteth he
hym so fast to his goddes þ al his wyt-
tes mooue not desseuere ne departe
hym from his goodes. And knoweth
wel or owght to knowe that whan
he is dede he shal nothyng bere wyth
hym out of this world. And therfor
sayth saint Augustyn. That the auar-
icious man is lykened vnto helle.
þ the more it swolowe the more hit de-
spreth to swolowe and to deuoure.
And as wel as pe wold eschew to be
called an auaricious man or a chyn-
ce as wel shold pe kepe you & go-
uerne you in suche wyse that men
not be ydle. But shewe to
doo thy prouffyt. For thou shalt in

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kepe yow not fool to ge.

Therfor sayth Tulpus the goodes be opened by ppte and by debonaryte that is to saye to geue hym parte þ haue grete nede. Ne thy goodes shold not be so open to be euery mannes goodes. Afterward in getyng of your rycheffe and vsyng hem ye shal alle way haue thre thynges in your herte That is to saye our lord god. goode consience. and god name. First ye shal haue god in your herte. And for no ryches ye shal doo no thyng whiche may in ony maner wyse dysplese god that is our creatour and maker.

After the word of Salamon. it is better to haue a lypyl good wpyth the loue of god than for to haue moche golde and tresour and to lese the loue of his lord god. And the pphete saith that better it is to be a good man & haue lypyl good and tresour than to be holde a shewe and haue grete rycheffe. And yet say I furthermore þ ye shal alway do your besynes to gete yow ryches so þ ye gete them wpyth good consience. And the appostle sayth that there nys nothyng in this world of whiche we shal haue so grete Ioye as whan our consience berith vs good wpynes. And the wyse man sayth that the substaunce of a man is ful good whan spynne is not in mannes consience. Afterward in getyng of your rycheffe and in vsyng of them ye must haue grete besynes and dyslygence that your good name be alway kept and conserued. For Salamon sayth That better is and

more it auayleth a man for to haue a good name than for to haue many ryches. And therfor he saith in another place. doo grete dyslygence in kepyng of thy frende and in kepyng of thy good name. for it shal lenger abyde wpyth the than ony other tresour. be it neuer so precious & certes he shold not be called a gentylman þ after god and good consience alle thynges left ne doth to kepe his good name. And Casspodye sayth that hit is synne of a gentylle herte whan a man soueth and despyeth to haue a good name. And therfore saith saint Augustyn. that ther be two thynges that be necessarye and nedeful. that is good consience and good loos.

And he that trusteth hym so mych in his good consience that he despyseth and setteth at nought his good name or loos he doth not well.

for he that reketh not to kepe his good name nys but a cruel chole.

Byre now haue I shewed yow how ye shold do in getyng of ryches and how ye sholde vse hem.

And I see wel that for the trust that ye haue in your ryches ye wolde me in warre and bataylle. I counceylle yow that ye begyn no warre in truste of your riches. for they suffyse not warrres to mayntene. & therfor sayth a phylosophre that man that despyreth algate & wyl haue warre. shal neu haue suffysaunce for the ryche þ he is the greter dyspence muste he of thyn hous ne shold not be hyd ne kepte so cloos but that they myght

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make yf he wyl haue worship and
wyctorye. And salamon sayth That
the grete ryches þa mā hath the more
dyspence he hath And therfore al be
it so that by fortune a ryches ye may
haue many folke. yet behoueth it not
ne it is not good to begynne warre.
where that ye may haue in other ma-
ner pees vnto your worship a prouf-
fyt. For the victories that ben of ba-
taille in this world. ben not in grete
hombre and multytude of people ne
in vertu of man. But it lyeth in the
wyl and in the hand of our lord ihū
god almyghty. And therfor Judas
machabe⁹ whiche that was goddes
knyghte. whā he shold fyght agayn-
st his aduersaries that had a grete-
ter nombre and gretter multytude
of people and stronger than was the
peple of Machabee. yet he recomfor-
ted his lytel peple and sayd ryght in
this wyse. Also spghly sayd he may
our lord god geue wyctorye to a fewe
folke as to many folke. For the vic-
tore of a bataille cometh not by a gre-
te nombre of people but hit cometh
from our lord god of heuyn. And
dere syr for as moche as there is noo
man certayn that he be worthy that
god wyl geue hym wyctorye or not.
Salamon sayth Therfor euery man
shold gretefully drede warres to begyn-
ne and by cause that in bataille falle
many perylls. And happeth other-
whyle þa also sone is a grete mā slain
as a lytel man And as is wyton in
the second booke of kynges. The de-
des of bataille been. vnturous and

nothyng certayn. For as spghly is
one hurte wyth a spere as a nother
And forether is grete payn in warre
therfor shold a man eschewe and fle
warre in as mychel as a man may
goodly. For salamon sayth he that
louyth payn shal sal in payn: After
that dame prudence had spoken in
this mater Heliebre answerde and
said I se wel dame prudence that by
sayr wordes a by your reasons that
ye haue shewed me. that warre ly-
keth you nothyng. but I haue not
herde yet in this counceyll. how I
shal doo in this nede. Certes sayde
she I counceyl you that ye accorde
wyth your aduersaries that ye haue
pees wyth them for saint iame saith
in his epytles. That by accorde and
pees the smale ryches waye grete.
And by debate and dyscorde the gre-
te richesse fallen down aod faplen.
And ye knowe wel that one of the
gretest and most souerayn thyng þa
is in this world is vnyte a pees. and
therfor sayth our lord ihū crist to
his appostles in this wyse wel hap-
py and blyssid be tho that louen and
purchacen pees. For they be called
chyldeyn of god A sayd mellebe ne w
see I wel þa ye loue not myn honoure
ne worship. ye knowen that myn ad-
uersaries haue begonne this debate
And ye see wel that they ne requyre
ne praye me of pees ne they aye not
to be reconceylled wold ye than that
I goo a meke me to obeye me vnto
hem a crye hem mercy for sothe þa we
re not my worshyp. For ryght as

The Tale of Chaucer

men sayn ouer grete sublenes engen-
dryth grete dyspraysunge so shold it
fare by me:; doynge this grete humi-
lyte or mekenes. Than began pru-
dence to make semblaunte of wrath
and sayd sƿr saue your grace. Also
ue your honour and your prouffight
as I doo myn owen and euer haue
doo neyther ye ne none oither sawe
neuer the contrarpe. and yet yf I had
sayd that ye sholde haue purchard
your pees and the recounsaiacon I
ne had my lyl myscaped ne sayd a-
mys. For the wyse man sayth. The
dysencion begynneth by a nother
man. And the recounceypling by him
self begynneth. And the prophete
sayth flee shrewdenes and doo good-
nes seke pees and folowe it in as my-
lil as i the is. yet say I not h ye shal
rather pursiwe to your aduersarys
es for pees. than theis shal to you.
for I knowe wel ynought that ye
be so harde of herte that ye wyl doo
no thyng for me. And salomon saith
that he that hath ouer harde an her-
te he at leste shal myshappe and mys-
tyde. Whan Melibe had herd dame
prudence make semblaunte of wra-
the he sayd in this wyse. Dame I
praye you that ye be not displeid of
of thynges that I saye. for ye knowe
wel that I am angry and wroth and
that is no wonder And they that ben
wroth wote not wel what they doon
ne what they sayn. Wherfor the pro-
phete saith that troubled eyen haue no
clere syght. But say ye and counceyl
me as you goodly listh. For I am re-

dy to do right so as ye wyl desyre.
And yf ye wil repprue me of my folie
I am to more holden to loue you and
to prysse you. For salamon sayth.
He that reppruyth hym that doth fo-
lye he shal synde gretter grace then
he that dysseyueth hym wyth swete
wordes. Than sayde dame pruden-
ce I make no semblaunt of wra-
the of angre but for your prouffight.
For salamon sayth. he is more wra-
the that repprueth or chydeyth a fool
for his folie shewyng hym semblaun-
te of wrath than he that supporteth
hym and preyseyth hym in his mysdo-
yng and lawyth at his folie. And
this same salamon sayth afterwar-
d h by the sorowful vspage of a man
that is to saye by the sorow and theyr heuy
condemnaunce of a man the fool corre-
cteth hym self and amendeth. Than said
melibe I shal not con answer you
vnto so many sayr resons as ye haue
put to me and shewed. Saye shortly
your wyl and your counceyl and I
am redy to performe and fulfille it.
Than dame prudence dyscouertyd al
her wyl vnto hym and sayd. I coun-
ceyl you aboue alle thynges that ye
make pees betwene god and you.
and be ye recounceylled vnto hym and
to his grace. For as I haue sayd a-
fore. God haue suffryd you to haue
al this tribulacion and desese for your
synnes. And yf ye doo as I saye you
God wyl sende your aduersaryes
vnto you and make hem falle at
your feet. redy to do your wil and your
comandementes. For salamon saith

The Tale of Chaucer

Whan the condicion of a man is ple
saunt and spakyn to god. he chaun
geth the heres of the manys aduer
sarres & constreyneth hem to besek
hym of pees and of grace And I pra
ye yow to let me speke wpth your ad
uersarres pryncely. for they shal not
knowe that it be your wyllle or your
assente. & than whan I knowe her
wyll and her entente I may counceyl
yow the more seurely. Dame sayd
Welleber do your wyll and your ly
kyng for I put me ony in your dis
posicion and ordynance.

¶ Than whan dame prudence
t sawe the good wyll of her
husbond desyveryd & to ke
adurys in her self. thynkyng how she
myght bryng this nede to a good co
clusion & to a good ende. And whan
she sawe her tyme she sent for thys
aduersarres to come to her in to a
preuy place. And shewed wpsely bi
to them the grete goodnes that come
of pees. and the grete harmes & pain
les that ben in warre & said to hem
in a goodly maner. how that they
oughten to haue grete repentance of
the Inmyte and wronge that they
had doon vnto mellebe her lord and
her daughter.

¶ And whan they herde the
a wordes of dame prudence
they were so enspured and
raupsshed and had so grete Joye of
her. þat wonder was to telle A lady said
they ye haue shewid vnto vs the bles
syng of swetnes after the sawe of da
uid the pphete for the reconciling

whiche that we be not worthy to ha
ue in no manere. but we oughten to
requeyre it wth grete contricion and
humylite. that y. of your grete good
nes haue presented vnto vs. Now
see we wel that the science and the
connyng of Salamon is ful trewe
he sayd that swete wordes multiply
and encreasen frendes and make shre
wes to be debonayr and meke. Let
tes sayd they we put al our dede and
al our mater & cause. hoosly in your
good wyll. And be redy to obeye to
the comaundement of my lord melle
be. And dere and benygne lady we
praye you and besekhe you as meke
ly as we can that it lyke vnto your
grete goodnes to fulfyllen in dede
your wordes goodly. for we cony
deren and knowe the that we haue
offendyd and grypud my lord melle
be out of mesure so ferforth þat we be
not of power to make hym amedys
And thefor we oblygen vs and byn
de vs and our frendes for to done al
his wyllle and comaundementis. But
perauenture he hath suche angre &
suche wrath to vs warde by cause
of our offence. that he wol enioyne
vs suche payne that we may not be
re it ne susteyne it. And therefore no
ble lady we besekhe your noble pyte
to take suche auspement in this nede
that we ne our frendes be not dishe
ryted & dystroyed thourgh our folye.

¶ Lettes said dame prudence
c it is a harde thing þat righ
petyous that a man put
hym self al vnterly in abytracion

The Tale of Chaucer

Etes say I dame Prudence
 I graunte you wel that
 Cuet moche suffraunce is
 is not good. But yet hit foloweth
 not therof þe eny persone to whom
 men doo bysonye to take of it venge-
 ance. For that apperteyneth and
 longeth al only to the Iuges. For
 they shalle venge the bysonyes and
 the Iniuries. & therfor the two au-
 touters that ye haue sayd tofore bee
 alonely. Vnderstode in the Iuges for
 whan ye suffre ouer many wronges
 and bysonyes to be be don wpythou-
 ten punysshing they semen not a mā
 to doo only newe wronges but they
 commaunden hym and bydden hym
 to do synne. And the souerayns and
 the Iuges in theyr contrarie so my-
 kyll suffre of the shrewes and mysdo-
 ers. that they shold by suche suffrai-
 ce and by proces of tyme wayen of
 suche power & myght that they shold
 put out the Iuges & the souerayns
 from thre places. And at the laste to
 make hem to lese thier lordships but
 lste be now put that. that ye haue le-
 ue to venge. I say ye be not of my-
 ght ne power as now to venge yow.

For yf ye wyl make comparyson
 vnto the myght of your aduersarys
 ye shal fynde in many thynges þ
 I haue shewed yow of this. that her
 condycion is better than yours. &
 therfor say I that it is good as now
 that ye suffre and be patient. Forther
 more ye knowe wel that after the co-
 men saye. it is a wodenes to a man
 to stryue wpyth a more myghty man

thā he is hym self & for to stryue with
 a mā of euen strethe. þ is to say with
 a man that is as strong as hym self
 hit is grete peryl. And for to stryue
 wpyth a way ket than hym it is folpe
 And therfor shold a man flee stry-
 uing as mykyll as he myght. For sa-
 lamon sayth hit is a grete worship
 to a man to kepe hym fro noyse &
 stryf And yf so happe that a man of
 gretter myght & strenthe than thou
 arte doo the greuaunce. studepe and
 bespe the rather to stynte the greuan-
 ce. thā for to venge. For senke saith
 That he putteth hym in grete peryll
 that stryuet wpyth a gretter man
 than he is hem self. And caton sayth
 that yf a man of hyer estate or degre
 or of more myght than thou art do
 the anoyr or greuaunce suffre hym.
 For that ones hath greued the many
 another tyme releue the and help the
 yet set I caas that ye haue a space
 for to venge yow. yet ought you to
 take hede to al thysse thynges afore-
 sayd er that ye take vengeaunce. For
 I say that there be ful many thyng-
 ges that shalle restrayne yow of ven-
 geance taking and make yow for-
 to endyne to suffre and to haue paci-
 ence in the wronges þ haue be doen.
 Fyrst and forward and yf ye wylle
 consydere the defautes that been in
 your owen persone. for whiche de-
 fautes god hath suffred yow to ha-
 ue al this tribulaciō as I haue said
 before to yow. For the poete sayth.
 That we oughten patiently to take
 the tribulacions þ comen to be whā

The Tale of Chaucer

Wellebees frendes had herde this ne-
de and taken her aduysse and delaye,
ration of the forsaide mater and had
examyned by grete bespnes a grete
counceyl. thy pas ful counceyl for to
haue pees and reste. And that melle-
bee shold receyue with good herte his
aduersaries to foryeuene and mer-
cy. And whan dame prudence had
herd thassent of her lord mellebe and
of hys frendes. she was wonderly
glad in her herte and sayd. there is a
noble prouerbe that sayth the good-
nes that thou mayst do this day do
it. and abyde not ne delaye it not tyl
to morowe And therfor I counceyl þ
ye sende your messagers suche as be
dycrete and wyse vnto your aduer-
saries. Tellyng hem on your behalf
that ys they wyl trete of pees and of
accord. that they shawe hem wyth-
out delay or taryng to come vnto
vs whiche thyng performed was in-
dede. And whan these trespassours
repentyng folke of her soyes that is
to saye the aduersaries of mellebee.
had herd what thysse messagers sayd
vnto hem. they were right glad and
Ioful. and answerd ful meryly and
benygnyly yeldyng graces and than-
kes to her lord mellebe and to al his co-
panye. and shopen hem wythout de-
lay to go wyth the messagers and to
obey the comaundement of her lord
Wellebe. And right anon they toke
her waye to her lord mellebee. And
right anon she toke her waye to her
lordes courte and toke wyth hem som-
me of her true frendes to make seyth

for hem and for to be her borowes.

And whan the were comen to the
pysence of mellebee he sayd to hem
thysse wordes. hit stondesth thus say-
de Wellebee and soth it is that causes
and wythouten sylp and reson ye haue
don grete Inuuries to me to my wyf
prudence and to my doughter also.
For ye haue entred in to my hous
by dysolence and haue doon suche oul-
trage that al men knowe wel that ye
haue deseruyd deth. and therfor wolde
I knowe of you whether ye wyl put
te pow to punysshyng and the chastyng
and the vengeaunce of his outrage in the
wyl of me and of my wyf or elles not.

Then the wyfeste of hem thre
answerd for hem alle and
sayde. Syr sayde he we

knowe wel that we be vnworthy to
come to the courte of so grete a lord
and so worthy as ye be. for we haue
so grete mystrykyn vs and haue
offended and gylted in suche wyse a-
gaynst your hye lordship that trew-
ly we haue deseruyd the deth: but yet
for the grete goodnes and debonour
te that alle the worlde wytnesseth of
your persone. we submytte vs to the
excellence and benignyte of your gra-
uous lordship. and besekyng you of
your mercyful pite ye wyl considere
our grete repentance and our lowe sub-
myssyon and graunte vs foryeuene of
our outrageous trespasses and of
fensis.

For wel we
knowen that youre lyberal grace and
mercy stretchen farther in to goodnes
than doon our outrageous gyltes.

and trespasses in to wylkednes. Al be it that cursedly and dampnably we haue a gyfted and a gi. upd youre hys lordshipp.

¶ Han Wellebee tolde hym
t from the grounde ful full
benyngly and receyued her
obligacions and bondes by her o-
thes vpon her pledges & borowes. &
assygnd hym a certayn daye to retorne
vnto her courte for to receyue and
accepte the Iugement that mellebee
wold comaunde to be doon en hym
by the causes aforesayd. Whiche thin-
ges ordeyned euery man retowred to
his owen hous. And whan dame
prudence sawe her tyme she feyned &
aved her lord mellebee. What venge-
ance he thought to take vpon his ad-
uersaries. to which mellebee answerd
and sayd certes I thynke & purpose
me fully to dysheryte hem of alle þ
cuer they haue and put hem in exyle
for euermore. Certes sayd dame pru-
dence. This were a cruel sentence &
moche agaynst reson for ye be riche
ynough and haue non nede of other
mynnes goodes. And ye myght ful-
lyghly in this wyse gete yow a full
conetous name. Whiche is a vycious
syrupng and ought to be eschewed of
euery good man. For after the wor-
de of thapostle. Couetyse is the rote
of al haunes And therfor it were bet-
ter to yow to lese so moche good of
your owen than for to take of her
good in this manere. For better it is
to lese good wpth worship. than it is
to wyne good wpth bysenye and

shame. And euery man ought to do
his dyslignce & besynes to gete hym
a good name. & yet shal he not foolly
besre hym in slepyng of his good na-
me. But he shal alle way enforch to
do somme thyng by wyche he may
renouelce or renowe his good name.
For it is wyrtow that the olde goode
loos of a man or good name is sone
gryon and passid whan it is not re-
wed ne renouelyd. and as touchinge
that ye sayn. ye wol exyle your ad-
uersaries. that thynketh me moche
agayn reson and out of mesure. con-
syderyng the power that they haue
yeue von vpon hem self. And yet it
is wyrtow that he is worthy to lese
his pryuplege & mysuseth the myght
and the power that is yeue hym And
I set caas þ ye myght enioye hem þ
payne by right & by lawe. Whiche þ
I trowe ye may not do I say ye my-
ght not put it to execution for para-
uenture han were it lyke to retorne
to the warre as it was before. And
therfore ys ye wyl that men doo yow
obeysaunce ye must demene yow more
curtowsly. This is to say ye must ye-
ue more esy penaunce & Iugement.
For it is wyrtow that he þ most cur-
towsly remaundeth to hym men mos-
te obye. & therfor I praye yow þ in
this necessyte and in this nede ye cast
yow for to ouercome your herte for
senek saith. He that ouercometh his
herte. ouercometh the wyse.
And tullyus sayth. There is
nothyng so comendable in a gre-
te lord as whan he is debonayre

The Tale of Chaucer

and meke. And apperseyth hym light
ly. And I praye you that ye wyl
now forbode to do vengeance in su-
che a maner that youre good name
may be lepte and conscrupd. And þ
men may haue cause and mater to
prapse you of pyte and of mercy.
And that ye haue no cause to repete
you of thyng that is doon. For
Seretie sayth: he ouertrometh an e-
uyl maner that repeteth hym of his
victorie. wherfore I praye you lete
mercy be in your herte. To the effect
to the entente that god almyghty ha-
ue mercy on you in his lasse Iuge-
ment. For saynt James sayth in
his epistlys Iugement wythout mer-
cy shal be doo to hym that hath no
mercy on an other wyght.

Whan mellebec had herd the
w grete st:plles and resons of
dame prudence & her wy-
se Informacyon and techynges his
hert began tendyne to the wyl of
his wyf consyderyng her grete en-
teute conscrmed hym anon and as-
sentid to werke after her counceylle.

And thankyd god of whom pre-
cedeth alle goodnes and vertue that
hym had sente a wyf of grete dyscre-
cyon. And whan the day cam that
his aduersarys shold appere in his
presence. He spak to hem ful
goodly and sayd in this wyse. Al-
be it so that of youre pryde and pre-
sumpcion and hye folwe of your ne-
gligence and incontinence ye haue

myssboune you and tressparyd vnto
me. yet for as mych as I see youre
grete humylyte and that ye be sor-
y and repentaunte of youre gyltes it
constrayneth me to doo you grace
and mercy.

Wherfore I re-
ceyue you to my grace and foryeue
you vtterly alle the offences Inuun-
es and wronges that ye haue doon
ayenst me to this effecte and to this
ende. that god of his endles mercy
wyl at the day of my deying forye-
ue me my gyltes. that I haue tresp-
aryd to hym in this world.

For
doubteles ys we be sorpy and repen-
taunte for our synnes and gyltes.

The spght of our lord god is soo fre
and soo mercypable that he wyl for-
gyue vs our gyltes and bryng vs
to the blyss that neuer shalle haue
ende Amen.

Here endeth Chaucers Tale of
Mellebec and Prudence his wyf &
Dophye his daughter of moralite.

The monkes prologue

Here begynneth the monkes prologue

W^han endyd was the tale of Mellesse
And of prudence and her benygnte
Pure hoost sayd as I am feythfulle man
And by that precious corpus Madrian
I hadde lyuer than a barelle of ale
That good leef my wyf hade herde this tale
For she is nothyng of suche patience
As was this Mellesseus wyf prudence
By goddes bones whan I bete my knaves
She bryngeth me the grete clobbered staves
And cryeth she the dogges euerichone
And breke bothe daie and every bone
And if that any nyghboure of myn
Wol nat in chirche to my wyf enclynne
Or so hardy to her to trespase
Whan she comyth home she rampeth in my face
And cryeth fals colwarde wreke thy wyf
By corpus dominus I wol haue thy knyfe
And thou shalt haue my distaue and go spynne
From day to nyght she wol thus begynne
Alas she sayeth that euir I was shape
To wedde a mythesoppe a colwarde ape
That wol be ouir ledde with every wight
Thou darst nat stonde by thy wyues right
This is my lyf. But if that I wolde fight
And ouir at the dore anon I must me dight
And elles I am lost but if that I
Be lyke a wyldde yroun fool hardy
I wote wele she wol do me she som day
Som nyghboure and than go my way
For I am warlous with knyf in honde

The monkes prologue

Al be it that I dar nat her withstonde
For she was byt in armes by my feith
That shal he fynde that her my dooth or sayeth
But let vs passe a way from this matere
Opylorde sir monke he sayd he mery of chere
For ye shalle telle a tale trulpy
So Kouchestre stondeth here fast by
Kpde forth myn owne lorde breke nat ouz game
But by my trouthe I knowe nat pouz name
Whethez shalle I calle you my lorde dan John
Or dan Thomas dan robert or dan Albon
Or of what house be ye by poure fader kyn
I wolwe to god thou hast a fulle sayre chyn
It is a gentyl pasture there thou goost
Thou art nat lyke a penaunt or a goost
Upon my feyth thou art som officere
Som worthy Seyten or som celerere
For by my fadre soule as to my dome
Thou art a mayster whan thou art at home
No poure clostere ne no poure nouyce
But a gouernoure wys and wyse
And therewith of braune and of bones
A wele faryng persone for the nones
I pray to god geue him confusioun
That first the brought into religion
Thou woldest haue be a tredsoule a right
Haddyf thou as grete leue as thou hast myghte
To parfouze me alle thy lust in engendrure
Thou haddest beggoted many a creature
Allas why werist thou so wyde a cope
God geue me sorowe and I were pope
Nat only thou but euery myghty man
Though he were shore hith upon his pan

The monkes prologue

Sholde haue a wyf, for alle this worlde is loyn
Religioun hath take by alle the royn
Of treddynge and boyl men be shrympes
Of feble trees there comyth wretched pynes
This makith that oure heyres be so slendes
And feble that they may nat wele engendre
This makith that oure wyues wol assay
Religpous folke for they may better pay
Of venus paymentes than may we
God wote no bussheburghes pay pe
But be nat wrothe my lord though I pley
ful ofte in game a soth haue I herde say
This worthy monke toke alle in patience
And sayd I wol do my diligence
As fer as folweth into honeste
To tel you a tale or two or thre
And if you lyst to herken hedprwarde
I wol you sayn of the lpt of seint Edward
Of elles tragedys first I wol telle
Of whiche I haue an hundred in my cello
Tragedy is for to telle a certayn stozp
As olde bokes maken memozy
Of them that stonden in grete prosperite
And is falle oute of high degre
In to myserp and endith wretchedly
And they been bercyfed comonly
Of sey feet whiche men clepen exanetron
In prose the been endyted many one
And in metre many a sondry wyse
So this ougth ynough to suffise
Now herkeneth if you lyst for to here
But first I beseeche you in this matere
Though I by ordre tel nat these thynges

The monkes Tale

Be it of popes Emperoures oz kynnges
And after theiſe ages as men wryten fynde
But telle them ſom biſoze and ſom beſynde
As it comyth to my remembraunce
Haue me excuſed of myn ignoraunce

Here endith the monkes prologue
And begynneth his Tale



¶ Wol be wayle in maner of tragedye
The harme of them that ſtonde in high degre
And ſpille ſo that there nas no remedy
To bryng them oute of theire aduerſite
For certayn whan that fortune lyſt to fle
Ther may no man of hee the cours withholde
Late noman truſte on beſynde prosperite
Be ware by this enſample yong and olde
At Lucifer thought he an yungel were

The monkes Tale

And nat a man at him I wol begynne
for though fortune may nat anngel dere
from high degre yet syl he for his synne
Doun into helle where he is yet in
O lucifer brightest of aungelles alle
Now art thou sathanas thou mayst nat twyn
Dute of mysery whiche thou arte falle

So Adam in the felde of damascene
With goddes owne synger brought was
And nat begoten of mannes sperme bndene
And welte alle paradise saupng one tre
Hadde neuir worldy man so high degre
As Adam. tyl he for mysgouernaunce
Was dryuen oute of his high prosperite
To laboure and to helle and to myschaunce

So Sampson whiche that was annunciat
By the aungel long oz his natiuite
And was to god almyghty consecrate
And stode in nobles while he myght se
Was neuir suche a nother as was he
To speke of strengith and therto hardynes
But to his wyues told he his secre
Through whiche he slough him for wrechydnesse

Sampson this noble and myghty champion
Withoute wepyn sane his handes tway
He slough and alle to rent the spoun
Toward his weddyng walkyng by the wey
His fals wyf coude him so please and pray
Tyl she his counseyl knewe and she bntreue
Vnto his foos his counseyl gan be wrap
And him forsoke and toke an other newe

An hundred foyes toke Sampson for ire
And alle theire tayles he to gydder bonde

The monkes Tale

And set the foyes tayles alle on fyre
For he in euery tayle put a bronde
And they brent alle the cornes of that conde
And theire olyues and theire wyne the
A thousand men eke he slough With his honde
And hadde no weppyn but an asses cheke

Whan they were slayn so thristed him that he
Was wele nyght loyn for whiche he gan to prey
That god worde of his peyne haue som pyte
And sende him drynke or elles must he dye
And of this asses cheke that was so drye
Dute of a want to the sprang anon a welte
Of whiche he dranke ynough shortly to say
Thus halpe him god as Iudicum can tel

By very force at gasa on a nyght
Maugre the phyllystiens of that cyte
The gates of the town he hath by plight
And on his backe y caried them hath he
High on an hille where as men myght them se
A noble and myghty samson leef and dere
Hadde thou nat tolde to women thy secre
In alle this worlde ne hadde be thy pere

This Samson neyther spyde dranke ne wyne
Ne on his hede cam rasoure none ne shere
By precept of the messangere deuyne
For al his strengthes in his heris were
And fully twenty pere by pere

Of israel he hadde the gouernance
But after sone wept he many a tere
For wyemen brought him to myschaunce

Unto his lemman dalida he tolde
That in his heris alle his strenght lay
And falsely to his foos him she solde

The monkes Tale

And sleppynge in her barme vpon a day
They made to clyppe or shere his here a lere
And made his fomen alle his craft aspyen
And whan that they him fonde in suche array
They bonde him faste and put oute his eyen

But of his heres were clypped or shawe
There nas no bonde that myght him bynde
But now is he put in pryson in a caue
Where as they made him at the quene grynde
O noble Sampson strongest of mankynde
O whilom iuge in gloze and in riches
Now mayst thou wepe with thy eyen blynde
Sithen thou art from wele fallen into wrecchidnes

The ende of this captyf was as I shalle say
His fomen made a feest vpon a day
And made them as their fool bifoze the temple
And this was in a temple of grete array
But at the last he made a foule fray
For he two postes shoke and made them falle
And down fyllte the temple and there it lay
And slew him selue and eke his fomen alle

This is to say the prynces euerichone
And eke thre thousand bodies were there slayn
With fallynge of the grete temple of stone
Of Sampson wol I nomore sayn
Be ware of this ensample olde and playn
That no man telle their counseyl to their wyues
Of suche thyng as they wolde haue secre sayn
If that it touche their lymmes or their lyues

O Hercules the sonerayne conqueroure
Synge his werkes laude and his renoun
For in his tyme of strenght he bare the flour
He slough and refte the shynne of the lion

The monkes Tale

And of Centaurus leyde the host a down
He arpie slowe the cruelle birdes felle
He the golden apples raft fro the dragon
He droue oute cerberus the hounde of hel
He slough the cruel tyraunt busirus
And made his horse to frete him fleshe and boon
He slough the very serpent venemous
Of achilles two hornes brake he that one
And he slewe cacus in a caue of stone
He slew the gyaunt Antheus the strong
He slough the gryself bore and that anoone
And bare his hede vpon his necke long

Was neuer wight sithen the worlde began
That slough so many monstres as dyd he
Through the wyde world his name ran
What for his strenght and his bounte
And euery realme went he for to see
He was so strong that no man myght him lette
And bothe wordes endys sayth Trophe
In stede of boundes he of bras a pylle set

Alemman hadde this noble champpon
That hight dyanpra as freshe as may
And as clerkes make mencion
She hath him sent a shert freshe and gay
Allas that shert allas and wela way
Enuenymed was subtelly with alle
That or he hadde werpd it half a day
It made his fleshe al fro the bones falle

But neuerthelesse clerkes her excusen
By one that hight nessus that it maked
Be as he may I wol nat her accusen
But on his body the shert he werpd alle naked
Tyl the fleshe was with the benym flaked

The monkes Tale

And whan he sawe none othez remedy
In hoot coles he hath him self raked
For with no benygn deynded he to dye

Thus starf this worthy myghty hercules
Lo who may truste in fortune any thowwe
For him that foloweth al this worlde of pree
Or he be ware is oft leyde false lowe
ful wyse is he that him self can knowe
Beware for whan that fortune lyst to gosse
Than wayteth she her man down to throwe
By suche a way as he wolde lest suppose
t he myghty trone the precious tresoure

The glorious septre and the ryal magesty
That hadde the kyng Nabugodonosor
With tongue bnneth may discribed be
He twyes wan ierusalem that cyte
The vessel of the temple he with him ladde
At Babilon was his souerayn see
In whiche his glory and his delyte he had

The fayrest children of the blode ryal
Of ierusalem he dyd dogelde a noon
And made eche of them to be his thralle
Among alle othez daniel was one
That was the wysest childe of euerichone
For he the dremps of the kyng expounded
Ther as in caldey clerkes were ther none
That wist to what fyne his dreame sowned

This proude kyng leet make a statu of gold
Sixty cubites long and seupn in brede
To whiche ymage bothe yong and olde
Comaunded he to loute and haue in drede
Or in a furnes fulle of flames rede
He sholde be dede that wolde nat obey

The monkes Tale

But neuiz wolde accorde to that dede
Dancel ne his pong felowes tway

This kyng of kynges proude and elate
He wende god that spyteth in mageste
He myght nat bereue of his estate
But sodenly he lost his dignyte
And lyke a best him semyd for to be
And ete hay as an ox and lay the route
In rayn with wyld bestes walked he
Tyl a certayn tyme was come aboute

And lyke an eglys fethers were his heris
And napples lyke byrdesclawes wer
God releuyd him at certayn peres
And paue him wytte and than with many a tere
He thanked god and euiz his syf in fere
Was he to do amys or more trespass
And or that he layd was on his bere
He knewe that god was full of myght and grace
h Is sone whiche that hight Balthasar

That held the regne after his faders day
He by his fader coude nat be ware
For proude he was of hert and of aray
And eke an ydolaster was he ay
His high estate assured him in pryde
But fortune cast him down and there he lay
And sodenly his regne can deuyde

A feste he made vnto his lordes alle
Upon a tyme he made them blythe be
And than his officers gan he calle
Both bryng forth the bestelles quod he
Whiche that my fader in his prosperite
Dute of the temple of ierusalem becraft
And to oure goddes thanke we

The monkes Tale

Of honoure that our elders with vs last
His wyf his lordes and his concubynes
By drunken while theire appetytes last
Dute of these noble vessels sondry wyne
And on a walle this kyng his eyen cast
And sawe an hounde armed that wrote fast
For fere of whiche he quoke and sigghed sore
This hound that balthazar made so sore agast
Wrote mane. techel. phares. and no more

In al that londe magicien was there none
This coude expowne what this lettre ment
But danyel expounded it anon
And sayd kyng. god to thy fadre sent
Glorie and honoure regne tresour and rent
And he was proude and nothyng god he drad
And therfore grete wrathe god bpon him sent
And him beaft the reigne that he hadde

He was oute cast of mannes company
With asses was his habitacioun
And ete he as a best in weet and dry
Tyl that he knewe by grace and by reason
That god of heuyn hath domynacion
Ouer euery reigne and euery crature
And than hadde god of him compassion
And him restored his reigne and his figure

Eke thou that art his sone art proude also
And knowest alle these thynges pryuely
And art rebel to god and his foo
Thou dranke eke of his vessels boldly
Thy wyf eke and thy wenches synfully
Dranke of the same vessels sondry wyne
And hezied false goddes cursedly
Therfore to the shapen grete pyne is

The monkes Tale

This honde was sent fro god that on the walle
Wrote mane techel phares trust me
Thy reigne is done thou wepest nat alle
Deuyded is thy regne and it shal be
To medes and to percypens quod he
And that same nyght the kyng was slaw
And daryus occupied his degree

Though he therto hadde nother right ne la we

Lordpnyes here by ensamples may pe take

How that in lordshyp is no sikyrnes

For whan that fortune wol a man forsahe

He berith a wey his regne and his richesse

And eke his frendes bothe more and les

And what man hath frendes through fortune

My shappe wol make him enemyes I gesse

This prouerbe is fulle soth and ful comune

c Enobia of Palymerie queene

As writeth percypens of her noblenes

So worthy was in armes and so hene

That no wight past her in hardynesse

Ne in lynage ne in none othez gentylnes

Of kynges blode of Perce is she descended

I say that she hadde nat moste fayrnesse

But of her shappe she myght nat be amended

From her childehode I fynde that she fled

Office of woman and to wode she went

And many a wylde hertes blode she shedde

With arowes brode that she to them sent

She was so swyft that she anoon them hent

And whan that she was elder she wolde hylle

Lyounes lybertes and berys alle to rent

And in her armes welde them at her wylle

She durst wylde bestes dennys sele

The monkes Tale

And renne in the mounten alle the nyght
And slepe vndre a busshie and she coude the
wraстыl by very force and very myght
With any yong man were her neuiz so wight
There myght nothyng in her armes stonde
She kept her maydenhede from every wight
To no man deyned she to be bonde

But at the last her frendes hath her married
To Dnedache a pryncce of that countre
Al were it so that she thym long tarped
And ye shalle vnderstonde how that he
hadoe suche fantasies as hadde she
but neuirthelesse whan they were knytted in fere
They lyued in ioye and in felicitye
for eche of them had othere leef and dere

Saue one thyng that she wolde neuiz assent
By no wey that he sholde by her lye
but onys for it was pleyne her entent
To haue a chyld the worlde to multiplye
And also sone as she myght aspye
That she was nat with childe with that dede
Than wolde she suffre him to do his fantasye
Eft sones and nat but onys oute of drede

And if she were with childe at that cast
No more sholde he play that game
Tyl fully forty daies were y past
Thenne wolde she onys suffre him the same
Alle were this onedache wyld or tame
he gat no more of her for thus she sayde
It was to wyues lythery and shame
In othere caas if men with them played

Two sones by this Dnedache had she
The whiche she kept in vertue and lettrure

The monkes Tale

But now bnto oure tale turne we
I say that so worſhipfulle a creature
And wyſe ther with and large with meſure
So penyſſe in warre and curteſy eke
Ne more labour myght in warre endure
Was noon though alle this worlde men wold ſeke
Her riche array ne myght nat be told
As wel in beſſet as in her clothynge
She was alle cladde in perre and in golde
And eke leſt nat for none huntynge
To haue of ſondry tonges ſolke knowynge
Whan that ſhe leſſer hadde and for to entende
To lerne booke was alle her lernynge
How ſhe in vertue her lyf myght diſpende
And ſhortly of this ſtoꝝ for to trete
So doughty was her huſbonde as ſhe
That they conquered many realmes grete
In the orient with many a ſayre crite
Appertenaunt bnto the maieſte
Of Rome. and with ſtrength helde them faſte
Ne neuiz myght her ſomen do her ſle
Al the while that Dnedahys daies laſt
Her batayles who ſo lyſt them for to rede
Agayn Sapor the kynge and other mo
And how alle this proceſſe ſyl in dede
Why ſhe conquerd and what tytle ſhe had therto
And after of her myſchance and of her wo
How that ſhe was beſegged and y take
Let him to my maſter petrarke goo
That writeth ynough of this I undertake
Whan Dnedache was dede ſhe myghtely
The realmes helde and with her owne honde
Agenſt her foes ſhe fought truly

The monkes Tale

That ther nas pryncce ne kyng in alle that sonde
But were glade if they that grace fonde
That she ne sholde spon his sonde warrey
With her they made allpauce by bonde
To be in peas and let them ryde and pley

The emperoure of Rome Claudius
Ne him biforn the Romayn Bassene
Ne durst neur be so corageous
Ne noon ermyne ne none egipcien
Ne surzen ne none arzabien
Within the felde that durst with her fight
Lest that she wolde them with her handes slayn
Or with her meney put them to flight

In kynges habite went her sones two
As heires of her realmares alle
And hermanno and titamallo
Theire names were as perciens them calle
But a fortune hath in her hony galle
This myghty quene may no while endure
Fortune oute of reigne made her to falle
To wrechydnesse and to mysauenture

Aurilian whan that the gouernaunce
Of Rome cam in his hondes twey
He shope spon this quene to do vengeance
And with his lettyons he toke his wey
Toward Cenobie and shortly for to say
He made her fle and at the last her hent
And fettyd her and eke her children twey
And wan the sonde and home to Rome he went

Among othez thynges that he wan
Her chare that of golde was wrought and perze
This grete Romayn this Aurilpan
Hath with him lad that for men sholde se

The monkes Tale

Byfor his tryumphe walchyd she
With golden cheynes on her hangyng
Crouned she was as a fete her degre
And ful of perz charged her clothyng
Alas fortune she that whilom was
Dredefulle to knynges and to Emperours
Now gaureth alle the people on her alas
And she that helmyd was in starke stoures
And wan by force townes strong and toures
Shal on her hede now were a tre myte
And she that bare the sepre fulle of floures
Shal bere a dystaf her cost for to quyte
O If I plane grete Barnabo biscount
God of delyte and scourge of Lumbardy
Why sholde nat I thy fortune acounte
Sithen in estate thou comben were so hye
Thy Brother sone that was thy double alye
For he thy nebe we was and for ne in la we
Within his pryson made the to dye
But why ne how not I that thou were sla we
O If the erle huglyn of pyse the langoure
There may no tongue telle for pyte
But tytel oute of pyse stondeth a toure
In whiche toure in pryson put was he
And with him his tytel chyldren thre
The eldest scarly spue pere was of age
Alas fortune it was grete ruelle
Suche byrdes to put in suche a cage
Dampned he was to dye in that pryson
For Roger whiche bisskop was of pyse
Hadde on him made a false subggestion
Throughe whiche the people gan on him aryse
And put him in pryson in suche wyse

The monkes Tale

As ye haue herd and mete and drynke he hadde
So smal that wele vnneth it may suffice
And therwith al it was fülle poure and badde

And on a day it befelle that in that oure
Whan that his mete was wont to be brought
The gaylez shypte the dozes of the toure
He herd it wele but he spake right nought
And in his hert anon ther fyll a thought
That they for hungre wolde do him to open
allas quod he allas that I was wrought
Therwith the teris fyl from his eyen

His yong sone that thre yere was of age
Vnto his fadre he sayd why do ye wepe
Whan wol oure gaylez bryng oure potage
Is ther no morsel brede that ye do kepe
I am so hungry that I may nat slepe
Now wolde to god that I myght slepe euiz
Than sholde no hungre in my soule trepe
Ther is no thyng than brede that me were lyuez

Thus day by day this childe gan to crye
Tyl in his faders barne a doun it lay
And sayd fare wele fader I must dye
And kyssed his fader and dyed the same day
And whan the woful fader dede him say
for wo his armes he gan to byte
And sayd allas fortune and wela wey
Thy fals whele my woo alle may wyte

This othez childe wende that for hungre it was
That he his armes knewe and nat for wo
And sayd fader do nat so allas
But rather ete the flesche spon vs two
Dure flesche thou paine vs take oure flesche vs fro
And ete ynough right thus the childe sayde

The monkes Tale

And after that Within a day or two
They leyde them down in his lappe and deyed
Him self despayred eke for hunger starf
Thus endyd the myghty erle of pyse
From high estate fortune away him carf
Of this tragedy it ought ynough suffice
Who so wol here it in a lenger wyse
Redith the grete poete of ytapl
That hight daunte for he can it deuyse
fro poynte to poynte nat one worde wol he saye
a I thought that Nero were as vicious
As any feend that lyeth ful low adoun
yet he as tellith vs swetonys
Al this worlde hadde in subiection
Bothe est and west and septentrion
Of rubies saphires and of perles white
were alle his clothes browded by and doun
for he in gemmys gretly gan delyte
More delicate more pompeous of aray
More proude was neuer emperour than he
That ilke cloth that he hadde weyd one day
After that tyme he nolde it neuer se
Nettes of golde threde hadde he grete plente
To fyssh in tyber whan him lyst to pley
His lustes were as laue in his degre
for fortune as his frende wolde him obey
He Rome Brent for his despracy
The senatoures he slough upon a day
To here how that thow men wolde wepe and crye
And slough his brother and by his sustre lay
His modre made he in a pytous aray
for he her wombe leet slytte to beholde
where he conceived was so welaway

The monkes Tale

That he solptel of his modre tolde

No teris oute of his epen for that sighte
Ne cam. But sayd a fayre Woman was she
Grete Wondre is that he coude oz myght
Be domesman of hez dede Beaute
The Wyne to Bryng him comaunded he
And dranke a noon none othez wo he made
Whan myght is iopned vnto cruelte
Alas to depe wol the benym Wade

In youthe a mayster had this emperoure
To teche him lettrure and curte sy
for of moralite he was the floure
As in his tyme But if his bokes lye
And whyles his mayster hadde of him maystre
He made him so connyng and so souple
That long tyme it was oz tyrannye
Dz any byce durst in him vncouple

Seneca his mayster was of whiche I deuyse
Bicause Nero hadde of him suche drede
for he for his byces wolde him chastice
Discretly as by worde and nat by dede
Sir he wolde say an emperonz moot nede
Be vertuouse and hate tyranny
for whiche he made him a bathe to blede
Dn bothes his armes tyl he must dye

This nero hadde eke of accustumaunce
In youthe a penynt his mayster to ryse
whiche after ward him thoughte a grete greuaunce
Bicause he oft wolde him chastice
Therfore he made him dye in this wyse
To chese in a bathe to dye in this manere
Rathez than to haue a nothez turmentyse
And thus hath Nero slayn his mayster dere

The monkes Tale

Now fyl it so that fortune lyst no lenger
The high pryde of nero to cherp she
For though he were strong yet was she stronger
She thought thus by god I am to nryce
To sette a man that is ful fylled of vyce
By high degre and an emperoure him calle
By god oute of his sete I wol him tryce
When he lest wenyth sonest shal he falle

The people roos vpon him on a nyght
For his defaute and whan he it aspyed
Dute of his dores anon he hath him dyght
Alone and there he wende to be allyed
He knoched faste and ay the more he cryde
The fastyr shytte they the dores alle
Tho wylt he wele he hadde him self begyled
And went his wey no lenger durst he calle

The people cryde and rombled by and doun
That with his eris he herd how that they sayd
Where is this false tyraunt this neron
For fere ful nere oute of his wytte he Brayde
And to his goddes pytously he prayde
For socoure but it myght nat betyde
For drede of this him thought that he deyde
And ran into a gardeyn him to hyde

And in this gardeyn fonde he choles tway
And sytting by a fyre grete and rede
And to the choles tway he gan to pray
To sle him and to gyrd of his hede
That to his body whan he were dede
Were no despyte doon for his defame
Him self he stoggh he coude no better rede
Of whiche fortuneough and hadde game

The monkes Tale

W as newiz capdeyn Andre a kyng
That regnes mo put in subiectioun
Ne strenges was in feld of al thyng
As in his tyme ne greter of renoun
Ne more pompeous in high presumpcioun
Than olopherne whiche fortune ay lyst
Solicozouse ladde him vp and down
Tyl that he dede was or that he wist

Nat only that this worlde hadde of him a we
for lesyng of richesse and lyberty
But he made euery man renge his lawe
Nabuggodonosor was lord sayd he
None othez lord shal honoured be
Apenst his heste ther dar no wight trespas
Sane in bethulia a strong crite
Where Eliachim was preest of that place

But take kepe of the deth of olopherne
Amyd his hoost he dronke lay al nyght
Within his tente large as is a berne
And yet for alle his pompe and alle his myght
Judith a woman as he lay vp right
Slepyng his hede of smote and fro his tent
ful pryuelly she stole from euery wight
And with his hede vnto her town she went

W hat nedith it of kyng Antiochus
To telle his high and ryalle magesty
His high pryde his werke benemous
for suche a nothez man nas neuir as he
Redith what that he was in machabe
And redith the proude werkes that he sayd
And why he fyl from his prosperite
And in an hylle how wrecchidly he deyed

fortune him hadde enhaunced so in pryde

The monkes Tale

That verily he wende he myght attayne
Vnto the sterzys bpon euery syde
And in a balaunce to wey eche mounteyn
And alle the flodes of the see restreyne
And goddes people hadde he moost in hate
Them wolde he sle in turment and in peyne
Wenpnyng that god ne myght his pryde abate

And for that Nichamoz and Tymothe
Whiche iewes were benquysshed myghtely
Vnto the iewes suche an hate had he
That he had grathed his chare fulle hastely
And swoze and sayde ful despytously
Vnto ierusalem he wolde estsone
To wreke his pre on it ful cruelly
But of his purpos was he let fulle sone

God for his manace him soze smote
With inuysible wounde ay incurable
That in his guttes carf so and bote
That his peynes were importable
And certaynly the wreche was resonable
For many a mannys guttes byd he peyne
But from his purpos cursed and dampnable
For alle his smert he nolde him restreyne

But hadde anon parepten his hoost
And sodenly oz he than was ware
God daunted alle his pryde and alle his boost
For he so soze fyl oute of his chare
That alle his lymmes and his flesshe to tare
So that he ne myght go ne ryde
But in a chare men aboute him bare
Al for brosed bothe bake and syde

The wreche of god him smote so cruelly
That in his booy wyched wormes crept

The monkes Tale

And therewithal he stanke so horribly
That none of alle his meny that him kept
Whether that he woke oz elles slept
Ne myght nat of him the stynke endure
And in this myschief he wayled and he wept
And knewe god lord of euery creature

To al his hoost and to him self also
ful waltson was the stynke of his careyn
No man myght him bere to ne fro
And in his stynke and in his horrible peyn
He starf ful wretchydly on a mountayn
Thus hath this robber and this homycide
That many a man made to wepe and playn
Suche guerdon as belongeth vnto pryde

¶ The story of Alisaundre is so comune
That euery wyght that hath discrecion
Hath herd somwhat oz alle of his fortune
This wyde worlde as in conclusioun
He wan by strenght and by his renoun
They were glade for peas vnto him sende
The pryde of man and host he leyde adoun
Where so he cam vnto the worldes ende

Comparyson myght yet neuiz be made
Bitwyte him and an othez conquerour
For alle this worlde for drede of him quaked
He was of knyghthode and of freedom floure
Fortune him made the heire of high honoure
Saue wyne and women nothyng myght aswage
His high entent in armes and laboure
So was he ful of lounyng corage

What pryde were it to him though I you tolde
Of darius and of an hundred thousand mo
Of prynces erles and kynnges bolde

The monkes Tale

Whiche he conquered and brought to wo
I say as fer as a man may ryde or go
The worlde was his what shuld I more deuyse
For though I wrote and tolde you euir mo
Of this knyghthode. it myght nat suffice
Yet pere he reigned as I rede in Machabe
Philipps sone of macedone he was
That first was kynge of grece that countre
O worthy gentyl Arisaunde: alas
That euir shuld the falle suche a caas
Enpossoned of thy folke thou were
Thy ipe fortune hath turned into an aas
And yet for the ne wept she neuir a tere
Who shal peue men teris to compleyne
The dethe of gentylles and of fraunchise
That alle the worlde welded in his demeyne
And yet him thought it myght nat suffice
So ful was his corage of high empryse
Alas who shal me helpe to endite
Fals fortune and posson to dispyse
The whiche of alle this wo I wyte
By wysdome manhode and grete laboure
From humble bedde to ryalle magesty
By roos he Julius the conqueroure
That alle the occident by sonde and see
By strenght of hond or elles by tetrye
And into Rome made them tributary
And sithen of Rome emperour was he
Tyl that fortune weyt his aduersary
O myghty cesar that in Thessaly
Apenst pompeyus fader thyn in lawe
That of the orient hadde the cheualry
As fer as that the day begynneth to dawne

The Monkes tale

Them through knyghthode hast take and sla we
Saue fewe folke that with pompeius fledde
Through whiche thou puttest al the orient in a we
Thanke fortune that so wele the spedde

But now a lytel while I wol be wayle
This pompeius this noble gouernoure
Of Rome whiche that fledde at this batayle
I say one of his men a false traytoure
His hede of smote to wynde him fauoure
Of Julius. and to him the hede brought
Alas pompey of the orient conquerour
That fortune vnto suche a spye the brought

To Rome agayn repayrith Julius
With his tryumphe laureat ful hie
But on a tyme brutus cassius
That euil hadde of his hie estate enuye
Fulle pryueli had made conspiracy
Agenst this Julius in subtel wyse
And cast the place in whiche he shuld be
With boydehynes as I shal you deuyse

This Julius vnto the capitol went
Upon a day as he was wont to goon
And in the capitol noon him hent
This false brutus and his othez soon
And styched him with boydehynnes noon
With many a wound and thus they leet him lye
But neuil grunted he at no stroke but one
Or elles at two but if his story lye

So manly was this Julius of herte
And so wele loupd estatly honesty
That though his dedly woundes so soze smere
His mantel ouir his hippes cast he
For no man sholde se his preynte

The Monkes tale

As he lay in dilynng on a traunce
And wylt verily that dpe sholde he
Of honesty yet hadde he remembraunce

Lucan to the this story I recomende
And to Weton and to Balery also
That of this story Writen worde and ende
How that these conquerours two
Fortune Was first a frende and sithen a fo
Roman truste vpon her fauoure longe
But haue her in a wayte for euirmoo
Wytnes on al the conquerours stronge

O Noble o worthy petro glory of spayne
Whom fortune helde so high in magesty
Wele ought men thy pytous deth compleyne
Dute of thy londe thy brother made the fle
And after at a siege by subtelty
Thou were betrayed and ladde vp to his tent
Where as he with his owne honde slough the
Succedynng in thy regne and in thy rent

The felde of snowe with the eggle of blake therin
Caught with the lymerode coloured as a gleden
He brewe this cursydnes and al this synne
The wyched nest was werker of this nede
Nat charles of puerre that toke ay hede
Of trouthe and honoure. But of armorzke
Genelon of yner corrupt for mede
Brought this worthy kynng in suche a bryke

O worthy petro kynng of cypre also
That Alisaundre wan by high maystrye
Ful many an hethen wroughtest thou ful wo
Of whiche thy owne liettes hadde enuye
And for no thyng but for thy cheualry
They in thy bedde haue slayn the by the morowe

The Monkes tale

Thus can fortune wele gouerne and tye
And oute of ioye bryng men to sorowe

t He riche cresus whilom kyng of syde

Of whiche cresus cyrus soze him dradde
yet was he caught amyd alle his pryde
And to brenne men to the fyre him ladde
But suche a rayn down fro the firmament shadde
That queynte the fyre and made him to scape
But to be waze yet no grace he hadde

Tyl fortune on the galowes made him tye

Whan he escaped was he coude nat stynt
forno begynne a newe arraz agayn
He wende wele for that fortune him sent
Suche happe that he escaped through the rayne
That of his foos he myght nat be slayn
And eke a sweyn upon a nyght he mette
Of whiche he was so proude and so fayn
That in vengeance he alle his herte set

Upon a tre he was as him thoughte
There iupitez him wesse bothe backe and syde
And phebus eke a fayre towel him brought
To dry him with and therwith weyt his pryde
And to his doughter that stode him besyde
Whiche that he knewe in high sentence habounded
He hadde her telle what it signyfied
And she his dremps right thus expownded

The tre quod she the galowes is to me
And iupitez betokeneth snowe and rayne
And phebus with his towel so cleue
Betokeneth the sonne bemys soth to sayn
Thou shalt an hanged be fader certayn
Rayn shal the washe and sonne shal the drye
Thus she warnyd him ful plat and ful playn
His doughter that called was phanye

The Monkes tale

An hangyd was cressus the proude knyght
His ryalle trone myght him nat auayle
Tragedy is noon othez maner thyng
Ne can in synng cryng ne be wayle
But for that fortune alday wyl assayle
With vnware stroke the regnes that be proude
For whan men trust in her than wol she fayle
And couir her bright face vndre a cloude

Here endith the tale of the monke
And begynneth the prologue
Of the Nonnes preest

¶ Quod the knyght gode sir no more of this
That ye haue sayd is right ynough ywys
And mekyl more for syl helpe
Is right ynough to mekyl folke I gesse
I say for me it is a grete disease
Where as men haue be in welthe and ease
To here of thei soden falle alas
And the contraye is ioye and solas
As whan a man hath be in poure estate
And clymbeth vp and weyeth fortunate
And there abideith in prosperite
Suche thyng is glad som as thynketh me
And of suche thyng were gode for to telle
Ye quod oure hoost by seint poules belle
Ye say right soth this monke clappith loude
He spake how fortune couered with a cloude
I wot neuir what. and als of a tragedye
Right now ye herd and parde no remedy
It is for to be wayle ne compleyne
That. that is doon. and eke it is a peyne

The Monkes tale

As ye haue seyd to here of heupnes
Sir monke no more of this so god you blesse
poure tale anopeth alle this comoany
Suche talkyng is nat worth a butterfye
for therin is no disporte ne game
wherfore sir monke or dan piers by your name
I pray you hartely telle vs som what elles
for sikerly ner clynkyng of your belles
That on your Brydel hangge on euery syde
By heupnyng that for vs alle dryde
I sholde or this haue fallen down for slepe
alle though the slough hadde neuiz be so depe
Than hadde your tale alle be tolde in beyn
for certaynly as that these clerkes sayn
Where as a man may haue none audience
Nat helpith it to telle his sentence
And were I wote the substaunce is in me
If any thyng shalle wele reported be
Sir say som what of huntynge I you pray
Nay quod this monke I haue nolyt to pley
Now let a nother telle as I haue tolde
Than spake oure hoost with rude speche and bolde
And sayd to the nonnes preest anon
Come nere thou preest come hydez thou sir John
Tel vs suche thyng as may oure hertes glade
Be blythe though thou ryde vpon a iade
What though thy horse be foule and lene
If he wol serue the reche the nat a bene
Loke that thy hert be mery euir mo
yes sir quod he yes hoost so moot I go
But I be mery y wys I wol be blamed
And right anon his tale he hath attampyd
And thus he sayd vnto vs euerychone

The tale of the nonnes preest

This swete preest this godely man sir John

Here endith the prologue of the nonnes preest
And begynneth his tale



a poure wydowe somdele y stept in age
Was somtyme duellyng in a cotage
Besyde a groue stondyng in a dale
This wydowe of whiche I telle you my tale
Sithen that day that she was last a wyf
In pacience ledde a ful symple lyf
For lytel was her catel and her rent
By husbondry of suche as god her sent
She fonde her self and eke her doughtren two
Thre large sowes hadde she and no moo
Thre kyne and eke a shepe that hight malle
Wele soty was her boure and eke her halle
In whiche she ete many a slender mele

The tale of the Nonnes prest

Of poynaunt sawe ne knewe she neuir a deel
Ne deynthe morcel passed through her throte
Her dyet was accordaunt to her cote
Repleccioun ne made her neuir sete
A temperat dyet was her phisph
And excercise and hertis suffisaunce
The golwe leet her nothyng for to daunce
Ne apoplexie shent nat her hede
No wyne ne dranke she neyther white ne rede
Her lord was moost serupd with white and blak
Appke and broun brede in whiche she fonde no lak
Sepnd. Bacon and somtym an egg or tvey
And she was as it wer a maner dey
A perd she hadde enclosed alle aboute
With styches and dry dyched withoute
In whiche she hadde a coche hight chaunteclere
In alle the lond of crowyng nas his pere
His boyce was meriaz than the mery orgon
On masse dayes that in the churches goon
Wele spherez was his crowyng in his loge
Than is a cloke or in any abbey an orloge
By nature he crewe eche assencion
Of the equynoccion in the toun
For whan degrees fyftene were ascendyd
Than crewe he that it myght nat be amended
His come was redez than the fyne coralle
And battelyd as it hadde be a castel walle
His byl was blake as any gete it shone
Lyke a sure were his legges and his toon
His nayles whytter than the lily floure
And lyke the burnyd golde was his coloure
This gentyl cok had in his gouernaunce
Seuyn hennys to do alle his plessaunce

The tale of the nonnes preest

Whiche were his susters and his paramoures
And wondre lyke to him as of coloures
Of whiche the fayrest he wed in the throte
Was cleppd fayre dampsel parlote
He fetthered her an hundred tyme a day
And she him pleisith alle that euir she may
Curteys she was discrete and de bonapre
And compenable and her self so fayre
Sithen the tyme that she was seuen nyght old
That trulpy she hath the hert in holde
Of chauntecleres lokyng in euery lith
He louyd her so that wele was him therwith
But suche a iope it was to here them synge
Whan the bright sone gan to spryng
In swete accorde my leef is sez in lond
For that tyme as I haue anderstonde
Bestys and byrdes coude speke and synge
And it so fyl that in the dawning
As chaunteclere among his byrdes alle
Sat on his perche that was in the halle
And nexte him sat his fayre parlote
This chaunteclere gan to grone in his throte
As a man in his dreame is dretchyd soze
And whan that parlote thus herde him roze
She was agast and sayd hert dere
What ayleth you to grone in this manere
Ye be a bery slepaz fy for shame
And he aunswerd thus and sayd madame
I pray you that ye take it nat in greef
By god I mette I was in suche myscheif
Right now that yet myn hert is soze a fryght
Now god quod he my swenyn retche a right
And kepe my body oute of foule pryson

The tale of the Nonnes preest

gpe mette that I roumed by and doun
Withyn oure perde where I saue a best
Was lyke an hounde and wolde haue made a rest
Upon my body and wolde haue hadde me dede
His coloure was betwixte yelow and rede
And tpppyd was his tayle and bothe his eris
With blache bnylke the remenaunt of his heris
His snowte smalle with glowyng eyen tway
yet for his loke almost for fere I dey
This causith me my gromyng doutles
Abov quod she fy for shame hertles
Allas quod she for by god aboue
Now haue ye lost myn hert and al my loue
I can nat loue a colweid by my feyth
For certis what so any woman sayth
We alle desire if it myght be
To haue husbondes hardy wyse and fre
And secrete and none negarde ne no fool
Ne him that is agast of euery tool
Ne none auuntour by that god aboue
How durst ye say for shame vnto poure loue
That any thyng myght make thou a ferde
Haue ye no mannes hert and haue a berde
Allas and can ye be a ferde of swenynnes
No thyng but banyte god wote in swenyn is
Swenynnes been engendred of replecions
And of fume and of complexions
Whan humoures been to habundaunt in a wight
Certis this dreame whiche ye haue mette to nyght
I telde you trouthe ye may trust me
Cometh of superfluyte and rede coler parde
Whiche cause folke to drede in theire dremys
Of arowes and of fyre with rede lempys

The tale of the Nonnes preest

Of rede bestys that wol them bite
Of contyke and of waspes grete and lyte
Right as the humoure of melancoly
Causeth many a man, in slepe to cry
For fere of grete boles and berys blahe
Whelles blahe deuyles wol them take
Of othez humoures coude I telle also
That worke a man in slepe mekyl wo
But I wol passe as lyghtly as I can
Locaton whiche that was so wyse a man
Sayde he nat thus do no force of dremps
Now sir quod she whan we fle fro the bempys
For goddes loue as takith som layatyf
Upon peryl of my soule and of my lyf
I councei you the best I wol nat lye
That bothe of coler and of melancoly
ye purge you and for ye shal nat tary
Though in this toun be none appotecary
I shal my self two herbes teche you
That shal be for your hele and for your prow
And in oure yerde thow herbes shal I fynde
The whiche haue of thei properte by kynde
To purge you beneth and eke aboue
Forget nat this for goddes owne loue
ye be right colory of complexion
Where the sonne is in his ascencion
Ne fynde you nat replete of humoures hote
For if ye do I dar wele lay a grote
Than ye shal haue a feyur tercian
Whelles an agewe that may be your bane
A day or two ye shalle haue diggestyues
Of wormes or ye take your laxatyues
Of laureal centory and of fumetere

The tale of the Nonnes preest

Of elles of the elderberies that growyn there
Of catapuce or of gaytres beryes
Of herbe Iue growyng in oure yerde that mery is
Plucke them vp as they growe and ete them in
Be mery husbonde for your fader kyn
Dredith no dreme I can say you no more
Madame quod he gramercy of your loze
But natheles as touchyng dan catoun
That of wysdome hath suche a grete renoun
Though he hadde no dremes for to drede
By god men may in olde bokes rede
Of many a man more of auctorite
Than euer dan catoun was so moot I the
That alie the reuers sayth of his sentence
And haue wele founde by experiance
That dremys be signif:caciouns
As wele of ioye as of tribulaciouns
That folke endure in this lyf present
There nedith to make of this none argument
The very preest he with it in dede
One of the gretest auctoures that men rede
Sayth thus that somtyme two felowes went
On pylgrimage in ful gode entent
And hapned so they cam in a toun
Where as ther was suche congregacioun
Of people and eke of strayt herbigage
That they ne fonde as mehyl as a cotage
In whiche they bothe myght y loggyd be
Wherfore they must of necessite
As for that nyght departe company
And eche of them goth to his hostrye
And toke his loggyng as it wolde falle
That one of them was loggyd in a stalle

The tale of the Nonnes preest

Herre in the yerde With oren of the plow
That othez man was loggd wele pnow
As was his auenture oz his fortune
That vs gouerneth alle as in comune
And so it besyl long oz it were day
This man mette in his bedde there he lay
How that his felowe gan upon him calle
And sayd alas for in an oves stalle
This nyght shal I be murdered there I fy
Now herpe me dere brothez oz I dye
In alle the haste come to me he sayd
This man oute his stepe for fere abraide
And whan he was walked of his stepe
He turned him and toke of this no kepe
Him thought his dreame was but a banyte
Thus twyse in his slepe drempd he
And at the thridde tyme yet his felawe
Cam as him thought and sayde I am now slaw
Beholde my bloddy woundes depe and wyde
Arise by a rely in the morowe tyme
And at the west gate of the toun quod he
A carte ful of dung there shalt thou se
In whiche my body is hydde fulle pryuelly
Do that cart arest holdy
My gold causyd my deth soth to sayn
And tolde him euery poynt how he was slayn
With a fulle pytous face pale of hewe
And trust wele his dreame he fonde right trewe
For on the morowe as sone as it was day
To his felowes pynne he toke the wey
And whan that he cam to the oves stalle
After his felow he gan to calle
The hostellez answerd him anon

The tale of the Nonnes preest

And sayd sir poure felow is goon
As sone as day he went out of the toun
This man gan fal in suspicion
Remembryng of his dremps that he mette
And forth he goth no lenger wolde he let
Vnto the west gate of the toun and fonde
A dong carte as it were to dong sonde
That was arayed in the same wyse
As ye haue herde the dede man deuyse
And with hardy hert he gan to crye
Vengeaunce and iustice of this felony
My felowe murdered is this same nyght
And in this carte helpeth gappng by right
Scrye oute on the mynistres quod he
That sholde kepe and rule this cyte
Harow allas here lyeth my felowe slayn
What sholde I moze of this tale sayn
The peple oute stert and cast the carte to grounde
And in the myddel of the donge they fonde
The dede man than murdered was al newe
O blisful god that art so gode and trewe
Lo how that thou be wrapest murdre alwey
Murdre wol oute that se we day by day
Murdre is so waltson and abhomyable
To god that so iuste is and resonable
That he ne wol it suffre helpd to be
Though it abyde a yere or two or thre
Murdre wol oute this is my conclusioun
And right anon the mynisters of the toun
Haue hent the carte and so soze him pynded
And eke the hosteller so soze entpynded
That they behelwe theire wychednes anon
And were anhangyd by the necke boon

The tale of the Nonnes preest

Here may ye se that dremps be to drede
And certis in the same lyf I rede
Right in the nexte chaptre after this
I haue nat so haue I hope and blys
t Wo men that wolde haue passed ouir the see
For certayn causes in a fer countre
If the wynde ne hadde be contrarpe
That made them in a cyte to tarpe
That stode ful mery bpon an haupn syde
But on a day apenst an euyntype
The wynde gan chaunge and blewe as him self
Joly and glade they wenten to rest
And cast them ful ereky for to sayle
But herky to one man fylle a grete meruayle
That one of them in sleppng as he lay
He mette a wondre dreme agan the day
Him thought a man stode by his beddes syde
And him comaunded that he sholde abyde
And sayd him thus if thou to morowe wende
Thou shalt be drent my tale is at an ende
He woke and tolde his fela we what he mette
And prayde him his biage for to lette
As for that day he prayde him for to abyde
His fela we that lay by his beddes syde
Gan for to laughe and scorned him fulle faste
No dreme quod he may so my hert agast
That I wol let for to do my thynges
I set nat a strawe for thy drempnges
For sweuennes be but wanpters and lapes
Men mete alday of oules and of apes
And eke of many a mase therwith alle
And dreme of thyng that neuir was ne shalle
But sithen I se that thou wol here abyde

The tale of the Nonnes preest

And thus slouthen wylfully the tyde
God wote it reWith me fulle soze and haue gode day
And thus he toke his leue and went his way
But oz he hadde half his course y sayled
I nat why ne what myschaunce it ayled
But casualy the shippes botom to rent
And ship and man vndre the water went
In sight of othez shippes besyde
That with him sayled at the same tyde
And therfore sayre partelot so dere
By suche ensamples olde mayst thou here
That no man sholde be to rechelesse
Of dremps for I say the doutles
That many a dreme ful soze is for to drede
Lo in the lpf of seint kenelme I rede
That was kenulphus sone the noble kynng
Of meriturph how kenelme met a thyng
A lytel oz he were murdred on a day
His murdre in his visoun he say
His nozice him expounded it euery dele
His sweyn and had him kepe him wele
fro treson but he was but seyn pere olde
And therfore lytel tale he hath therof tolde
Of any dreme so holy was his herte
By god I hadde leuyr than my sherte
That ye had herde his leggende as haue I
Dame partlot I say to you truly
Macrobius that writeth the a visoun
In affryke of the worthy scypioun
Affermyth dremps and sayth that they been
Warnyng of the thynges that we after seen
And ferthermore I pray you lohit wele
In the olde testament of danyel

The tale of the Nonnes preest

If he held dremps any banpte
Rede eke of Joseph and there shal ye se
Wondres been somtyme but I say nat alle
Warnyng of thynges that shal after falle
Lo of egypt the kyng that hight pharo
His baker and his boteller also
Whether they felt none effect in dremps
Who so wol seke actes of sondry reamps
May rede of dremes a wondre thyng
Lo cretus whiche was of Spede kyng
Mette he nat that he sat vpon a tre
Whiche signified he sholde hanged be
Lo Andrometa Hectoures wyf
That day that Hectour sholde lese his lyf
She drempd in the same nyght biforn
How that the lyf of Hectoure sholde be lorn
If that day he went vnto batayle
She warnyd him but it myght nat auaile
He went for to fight natheles
But he was slayn anon of achilles
But that tale is to long to telle
And eke it is nyght day I may nat dulle
Shortly I say as for conclusioun
That I shalle haue of this auyssioun
Aduersite and I say furthymore
That I ne telle of layatpues no store
For they be benemous I wote it wel
I them diffy I loue them neuiz a deel
But now let vs speke of myrthe and stynt al this
Madame partlote so haue I slys
Of one thyng god hath me sent large grace
For whan I se the beaute of pouz face
Ye be so scarlet rede aboute pouz eyen

The tale of the Nonnes preest

It makith al my drede for to dpen
for also spheer as in principio
Nutiez est hominis confusio
Madame the sentence of this latyn is
Woman is mannes ioye and his blyssse
for When I fele on nyght your soft syde
al be it that I may nat on you ryde
for that oure perche is made so narrow alas
I am so ful of ioy and of solas
That I diffy bothe sweene and dreme
And with that worde he fyl down fro the beme
for it was day and eke his hennes alle
And with a chuk he gan them for to calle
for he hadde founde a corne lay in the yerde
Ryalle he was and he no man aferde
He fedred partelote tWenty tyme
And trade her eke as ofte oz it was pryme
He loketh as he were a grym spoun
And on his toos he rometh bp and down
him depned nat to set his feet to grounde
And chucked whan he had de a corne y founde
And to him ran his wpues alle
As ryalle as a prynce in his halle
Leue I this chaunteclere in his pasture
And after wol I telle of his auenture
Whan the moneth in the whiche the worlde began
That hight Marche that god first made man
was complete and passyd were also
Sithen Marche began tWenty daies and tWo
Besyl that chaunteclere in alle his pryde
his seyn hennes walkyng him besyde
Cast bp his eyen to the bright sonne
That in the signe of taurus was y ronne

The tale of the Nonnes preest

fourty degrees and one and somewhat more
He knewe by kynde and by noon other lore
That it was pryme and crewe with a blisful steupn
The sonne he sayde is clombe vp to heupn
fourty degrees and one and somewhat more ywys
Madame partote my wordes blys
Herthyn how this blisful byrdes synn
And se the freshe floures how they sprynn
ful is myn herte of reuel and solas
But sodenly him fyl a sorowful caas
For enir the lattre ende of iope is woo
God wot that worldy iope is sone ago
And if a rethoure coude sayre endite
He in a cronycle myght sauely wryte
As for a souerayn notabilite
Now euery wiseman herthyn to me
This story is also trewe I vnder take
As is the boke of Launcelot de lake
That women holde in ful grette reuerence
Now wol I turne apen to my sentence
A col for ful of sight and iniquyte
That in the groue hadde woned peres thre
By high ymaginacion a forncast
The same nyght throug the hedghe brast
Into the perde there chaunteclere the sayre
Was wont and che his wyues to repayre
And in a bedde of wortes styll he lay
Tyl it was past vndren of the day
Waytyn his tyme on chaunteclere to falle
As gladelv doon these homycides alle
That in a wayte tyghe to murdre men
A false murderz ruckyn in the den
Dne w scarlot and newe genellion

The tale of the Nonnes preeft

faſſe diſſimyloure o greke Synon
That broughteſt trope vterly to ſorowe
O claunteclere acurſed be the morow
That thou in the yerde ſley fro the hemys
Thou were ful wele warnyd by thy dremys
That ilke day was perious to the
But what that god afore wote muſt nedes be
After the opunyon of certayn clerkes
Wytneſ of him that any clerke is
That in ſcole is grete alteracioun
In this matere and grete diſputacioun
And hath been of an hundred thouſand men
But I ne can nat buſte it to the brenne
As can the holy doctoure auguſtyn
Or Boece or the biſſhop Bradwardyn
Whethey that goddes worthy fore wetynge
Strengthen me nedely to do a thyng
Nedely clepe I ſymple neceſſite
Or if the fre choos be graunted me
To do that ſame thyng or do it nought
Though god fore wote it or it was wrought
Or if his wytting ſtrengthen neuir a dele
But by neceſſite condicionel
I wol nat haue doon in ſuche matere
My tale is of a cok as ye ſhal here
That toke his counſeyl of his wyf with ſorowe
To walke in the yerde vpon the morowe
That he hadde met his dreame as I you tolde
Womens counſelles been ful oft colde
Womens counſeyl brought vs firſt to wo
And made Adam from paradise to go
There as he was ful mery and wele at eaſe
But for I not whom I myght diſpleaſe

The tale of the Nonnes preest

If I counceyl of women wolde blame
Passe ouir for I sayde it in my game
Redith auctoures where they trete of suche matere
And what they say of women ye may here
These been these coches wordes and nat myn
I can no harme of no woman deuyne
I praye in the sonde to bathe hez merily
I peth partelot and al hez susters by
Apenst the sonne and chaunteclere so fre
Sang meriax than the mar mayde in the see
For phisologus sayth bttterly
How that they songe wele and merely
And so besyl as he cast his eye
Among the wortes on a butterfye
He was ware of this foy that lay ful lowe
No thyng than lust him to crowe
But cryed anoon coke cok and by he stert
As may that was a frayde in his hert
For naturallly a best desireth to fle
Fro his contrary if he may it se
Though he neuir hadde seen it erst with his eye
This chaunteclere whan he gan him aspy
He wolde haue fledde but that the foy anon
Sayd gentyl sir alas what wyl ye doon
Be ye a frayde of me that am poure frende
Now certis I were wers than a feend
If I to you wolde harme or belony
I am nat come poure counseyl to aspye
But truly the cause of my comyng
Was only to here how ye syng
For truly ye haue as mery a steuyng
As any aungel hath that is in heuyng
Ther with ye haue of musike more fetyng

The tale of the Nonnes preest

Than hadde boece or any that can synge
Opp lordes youre fader god his soule blesse
And eke youre modre of her gentylnes
Haue in my house be to my grete ease
And certis sir ful fayne wolde I you please
But for men speke of synngyng I wolde say
Somoot I brouke wele myn eyen twey
Saue you ne herd I neuer man so synge
As dyd youre fader in the mornynge
Certis it was of herte alle the song
And for to make his voyce the more strong
He wolde so peyne him that with bothe his eyen
He must swynke so loude he must cryen
And stonde upon his tpytoos ther with alle
And stretch forth his necke long and smalle
And eke he was of suche discrecioun
That ther was no man in no regioun
That him in song or wysdome myght passe
I haue wele redde dan burnel the asse
Among his berse how that there was a cok
For that a prestes sone gaue him a knoke
Upon his legges whiche he was yong and nyce
He made him for to lese his benefice
But certeyn there is no comparison
Betwyte the wysdome and discrecioun
Of youre fader and of his subtelte
Now syngeith sir for seint charite
Let se can ye youre fadre countrefete
This chaunteclere his wynges gan to bete
As man that coude nat his treason aspye
So was he rauysshed with his flaterie
Alas pe lordes many a false flateroure
Is in youre courte and many a false losyngeoure

The tale of the Nonnes preest

That please you moche more by my feyth
Than he that sothfastnes vnto sayth
Redith ecclesiaste of flattery
Be ware ye lordes of theire trechery
This chaunteclere stood vpon his toos
Stretchyng his necke and helde his eyen cloos
And gan to crowe loude for the nones
And dan rassel the fox stert by at onys
And he gorget hent chaunteclere
And on his bake toward the wode him bere
And yet was ther no man that him sued
O destiny that mayst nat be eschewed
Alas that chaunteclere fle we fro the bempis
Alas his wyf raught nat of dremys
And on a fryday fyl alle this myschaunce
O venus that art goddes of plesaunce
Sithen that thy seruaunt was this chaunteclere
And in thy serupce dyd alle his powere
More for dyspente than the worlde to multiply
Why woldest thou suffre him thy day to dye
O gaufride dere mayster souerayn
That whan the worthy kyng Richard was slayn
With shot compleyndest his deth so soze
Why ne hadde I thy science and thy loze
The friday for to chyde as dyd ye
For on a friday shortly slayn was he
Than worde I shewe you how that I coude pleyne
For chaunteclere drede and for his peyne
Certis suche crye ne lamentacioun
Was neuir of ladies made whan that Iliou
Was wonne. and pirrus with his bright swerde
Whan he hent kyng pryame by the berde
And fle we him as sayth eneydos

The tale of the Nonnes preest

As made al the hennys in the cloos
When that they hadde of chaunteclere the sight
But souerainly dame partelote shright
ful lowder than dyd hasdrubales wyf
Whan that her husbonde had lost his lyf
And that the Romaynes hadde brent cartage
She was so ful of turment and of rage
That wylfully into the fyre she stert
And brent her self with a stedefast hert
O woful hennys right so cryden ye
As whan that nero brent the cyte
Of Rome cryde the senatoures wyues
for that thei husbondes sholde lese thei lyues
Withouten gylt nero hath them slayn
Now wol I turne to my tale agayn
This sely wydolwe and her doughters two
Herde the hennes crye and make wo
And oute at the doze stert they anoon
And sa we the foy towarde the wode goon
And bare spon his bake the cocke a wep
Any cryde oute and harowe and wela wep
Aha the foy and after him they ran
And eke with stauens many an othez man
Ran colle oure doge talbot and garlond
And makyn with her distaf in her honde
Ran cow and calf and eke the the berry hogges
for they so soze a ferde were of the dogges
And shoutyn of men and of women eke
They ran so theire hert thought to breke
They yellen as feendes doon in helle
The dokes cryde as men wolde them queste
The gees for fere ouir the trees
Dute of the hyues the swarme of bees

The tale of the Nonnes prest

So hideous was the noyse a Benedicite
Certis Iache st ra we ne his menpe
He made neuir shoutes half so shrille
Whan that they wolde any slemyng hylle
As that day was made vpon the foy
Of bras they blewe the trompes and of boy
Of horn and bone in which they blewe and poupyd
And therwith they shrilled and shoutyd
It semyd as though heuyn sholde falle
Now gode men I pray pou herthyn alle
Lo how fortune turneth sodenly
The hope and the pryde of her enmye
This cocke that lay vpon the foyes backe
In alle his dride vnto the foy he spake
And sayd sir if I were as ye
yet shoulde I say as wys god helpe me
Turneth apen ye proude thorles alle
A very pestilence vpon you falle
Now am I come vnto this wode spde
Maugre pouz hede the cocke shal here abyde
I wyl him ete in feyth and that anoon
The foy aunswerd in feyth it shalbe doon
And as he spake the worde alle sodenly
This cocke brake from his mouthe deliuerly
And higg vpon a tre he flewe anoon
And whan the foy sa we that he was goon
Alas quod he o chaunteclere alas
I haue quod he do to you grete tre spaas
In as moche as I made pou a ferde
Whan I pou hent and broughte oute of pouze perde
But sir I dpyd it nat in no wyched entent
Come down and I shal telle you what I ment
I shalle pou say soth god helpe me so

The tale of the Nonnes preest

Nay than quod he I shrewe vs both two
And first I shrewe my self bothe blode and bones
If thou bettyle me oftez than ones
Thou shalt nomore with thy flaterp
Do me syng with a wynkynge eye
For he that wynketh when he sholde se
Al wylfully god let him neuir the
Nay quod the foy but god geue him myschaunce
That is so indiscrete of gouernaunce
That iangeleth whan he sholde holde his pees
So suche it is for to be recheles
And negligent and truste on flaterp
And ye that holde this tale a folp
As of a foy and a cocke and an henne
Takith the moralite good men
For seint poule sayth alle that writen is
To oure doctrine it is writen p wys
Takith the fruyte and let the chaffe be styll
Now gode god if that it be thy wylle
As saythe my lord god make vs alle gode men
And bryng vs to thy high blyss amen

Here begynneth the manicles prologue

I Our nonnes preest oure hoost sayde a noon
p blessed be thy breche and euery stoon
This a mery tale of chaunteclere
But by my trouth if thou were seculere
Thou woldest be a tredfoule a right
For if thou haue corage as thou hast myght
The were nede of hennes as I wene
Ye more than seupn tymes seuentene
Se whiche braunes hath this hentyl preest
Sogrete a necke and suche a large breest
He lokith as a sparhanke with his eyen

The manciples prologue

him nedith nat his coloure for to dyen
With brasyl ne with grayn of portyngeale
But sir sayre false you for poure tale
And after that he with ful mery chere
Sayd vnto an man as ye shalle here
Wot ye nat where there stondith a lytel toun
Whiche that is clippyd bob bp and doun
Vndre the blee in caunterbery way
There gan oure hoost to iape and to pley
And sayd sires what dun is in the myre
Is there no man for prayez ne for hyre
That wol awake oure felow behynde
A theef myght him ful lyghtly robbe and bynde
Se how he nappith se for coches bones
How he wol falle from his horse at onys
Is that a coke of london with myschaunce
Do him comfort he knowith his penaunce
For he shalle tel a tale by my fay
Al though it be nat worth a botel hay
Awake thou coke quod he god grue the sorowe
What ayleth the to slepe by the morowe
Hast thou hadde fleen al nyght or art thou dronke
Or hast thou al nyght with somme quene y swonke
So that thou mapst nat holde by thy hede
This cook that was ful pale and nothyng rede
Sayde oure hoost so god my soule blesse
There is falle on me grete heynnes
Nat I nat why me were leuer to slepe
Then the best galon of wyne in chepe
Wele quod the manciple if may do the case
To the sir coke and to no wight wight displease
Whiche that here ryde in this company
And if oure hoost wol of his curtesy

The manciple's prologue

I wol as now excuse the of thy tale
For in gode feyth thy bysage is ful pale
Thyn eyn dasa wen sothely as me thynketh
And wele I wote thy breth ful soure stynketh
That she with wele thou art nat wele disposed
Of me certayn thou shalt nat be glosed
Se how he galpith. so this drunken wight
As though he wolde be swelow a noon right
Holde cloos thy mouthe for thy fader kyn
The deuyl of helle set his fote therin
Thy cursed breth wol enfecte be alle
By stynkyng swyne by foule moot the be falle
Takith hede sires of this lusty man
Now swete sir wol ye iuste at the ban
Therto me thynketh ye be wele shape
I trowe that ye haue dronke wyne ape
And that is whan men pley at the strawe
And with his speche the cook weyed al wraue
And on the manciple he gan to nodde fast
For lacke of speche a down the horse him cast
Where as he lay tyl that men him vp toke
This was a fayre cheuesauce of a cook
Allas that he ne hadde holde him by his ladyll
And oz that he ayn were in his ladyll
There was a grete shouyng bothe to and fro
To lyft him vp and mekyl care and wo
So swelody was this sely palled goost
And to the manciple than spake oure goost
Bicause that drynke hath dominacioun
Upon this man. by my sauacioun
I trowe lewdely wol he telle his tale
For were it wyne oz olde moyste ale
That he hath dronke he spekith so in his nose

The manciple's prologue

And fnesith fast and eke he hath the pose
He hath also to do more than ynough
To kepe him on his caple oute of the slough
And if he falle from his caple & ft sone
Than shal we alle haue ynough to done
In lyf tynng by his dronken corpe
Tel on thy tale of him make I no force
But yet manciple in seyth thou arte to nyce
Thus openly to reproue him of his vyce
Another day he wol parauenture
Reclapme the and brynng the to lure
I mene he speke wyl of smale thynges
And for to pynche at thy rechynges
That were nat honest if it cam to the preef
No quod the manciple that were a grette myschief
Somtyght he brynng me in to the snare
yet hadde I leuez pay for the mare
Whiche he rideth on than he sholde with me stryue
I wol nat wrathe him so moot I thryue
That I spake I sayde it but in Bourde
And wote ye what I haue here in my gourde
A draught of wyne ye of a rypp grape
And right a noon ye shal se a gode iape
This cook shal drynke therof if that I may
By payne of my lyf he wol nat say nay
And certaynly to telle as it was
Of this besfel the cook dranke fast alas
What nedith it he dranke ynough bifoyn
And whan he hadde pouppd in his horn
To the manciple he toke the gourde affayn
And of the drynke the cooke was ful fayn
And thanked him in suche wyse as he coude
Than gan our hoost to laughe wondre loude

The manciples tale

And sayde I se wele it is necessary
Where that we goon gode drynke with vs to cary
For that wol turne rancor and disease
To accorde and loue and many a worde to pease
O bacus y blissed be thy holy name
That so canst turne earnest into game
Worship and thanke be to thy depte
Of that matere ye gete no more of me
Tel on thy tale thou manciple I the pray
Wele sir quod he herkneth what I say

Here endith the manciples prologue
And begynneth his tale



Whan phebus duellyd here in erthe a doun
As olde bokes maken mencion
He was the moost lusty bachelere
Of alle the worlde and eke the best archere
He slewe pheton the serpent as hellay
Sleppynge ayenst the sonne vpon a day
And many a nother noble worthy dede

The manciples tale

He with his bolwe wrought as men may rede
Plepe he coude on euery mynstralcye
And synge that it was a melody
To here of his clere boyce the soun
Certis the kyng of Thebes amphioun
That with his song walled the cyte
Coude neuir synge half so wele as he
Therto he was the semelpest man
That is or was sithen the worlde began
What nedith it his feture to discryue
For in this worlde was there no man so fayre alpyue
He was ther with fulfyllid of gentylnes
Of honoure and of parfyte worthynes
This phebus that was froure of bachelery
As wele in fredom as in cheualry
For his disporte in signe eke of victory
Of pheton so as tellith be the story
Was wont to bere in his honde a bolwe
Now hadde this phebus in his house a crowe
Within a cage y fostred many a day
And taughte it speke as men telle a iay
White was this crowe as is a mythe whyte swan
And countrefetyd the speche of euery man
He coude whan he shulde telle a tale
There was in alle this worlde no nyghtyngale
Ne coude by an hundred thousand dele
Synge so wonderly merily and wele
Now hadde this phebus in his house a wyf
Whiche that he louyd more than his lyf
And nyght and day dyd euir his diligence
For to please and do her reuerence
Haue only the soth if I shalle sayn
Delous he was and wolde haue kept her fayne

The manicles tale

for him were lothe iaped for to be
And so is euery wight in suche degre
But al for naught for it anapled nought
A gode wyf that is cleue of werke and thought
Sholde nat be kept in noon a wayte certayn
And truly the labour is in beyn
To kepe a shrew for it wol nat be
This holde I for a veray nyete
To spylle labour for to kepe wyues
Thus Writen olde clerkes in theire lyues
But now to purpos as I first began
This worthy phebus doth alle that he can
To plesen her wenyngh through suche plesaunce
And for his manhode and for his gouernaunce
That no man sholde put him fro her grace
But god it wote there may no man embrace
As to distreyne a thyng whiche that nature
Hath naturally set in a creature
Take any byrde and put him in a cage
And do alle thyng entent and thy corage
To fostre it tenderly With mete and drynke
Of al deyntees that thou canst bethynke
And kepe it also clenly as thou may
Al though his cage of golde be neuir so gay
yet hath this byrde by twenty thousand folde
Leuer in a forrest that is wyld and colde
Goete wormes and suche wretchednesse
For euer this byrde wol do his besynesse
To ascape oute of his cage whan he may
His liberte the byrde desireth ay
Let take a cat and fostre her With mylke
And tendre fleshe and make her couche of silke
And let her se a mouse go by the walle

The manicles tale

Anoon she weyneth fleshe and conche and al
And every deynthe that is in that house
Suche appetyte hath she to ete the mons
Lo here hath lust his domynacioun
And appetyte flempt discrecioun
A she wolf hath also a bylens hynde
The lewdest wolf that she may fynde
Or leest of reputacioun that wyl she take
In tyme whan her lust to haue a make
Al these ensamples speke I by these men
That been vntrue and nothyng by women
For men haue euir a licorous appetyte
On lower thyng to parfourme theire delyte
Than on theire wyues be they neuir so fayr
Ne neuir so true ne neuir so debonayre
Fleshe is so newfangle with myschaunce
That we ne can in no thyng haue plesaunce
That sowndeth vnto vertue any while
Thus phebus whiche that thought no gyle
Disceyued was for alle his iolite
For vndre him a nother hadde she
A man of lytel reputacioun
Nought worth to phebus in comparisoun
The more harme is. it happith oft so
Of whiche there cometh moche harme and wo
And so besyl whan phebus was absent
His wyf anoon hath for her lemman sent
Her lemman certes that is a knauyshe speche
Forpene it me and that I you beseeche
The wyse plato sayth as ye may rede
The worde must nede accorde with the dede
If men shoulde telle properly a thyng
The worde must cosyn be to the workyng

The manciple's tale

I am a boystous man right thus say I
There is but tytel difference truly
Betwyte a wyf that is of high degre
If of her body dishonest she be
And a pore wenche othez than this
If it so be they werke bothe amys
But that the gentyl is in state aboue
She shal be clepyd his lady and his loue
And for that othez is a poure woman
She shalle be clepyd his wenche or his lemman
And god it wote myn owne dere brothez
Men say as lo we that one as that othez
Wight so betwyte a tytel tyraunt
And an outla we or a theef erzaunt
The same I say there is no difference
To Alisaundre was tolde this sentence
That for the tyraunt is of grete myght
By force of meyne to slee down a right
And brenne house and hoom and make al playn
So therfore is he clepyd a capdeyn
And for the outela hath but smalle meyne
And may nat do so grete an harme as he
Ne bryng a countre to so grete myschief
Men clepe him an outla we or a theef
But for I am a man nat textuele
I wol nat telle of textes neuir a deel
I wol go to my tale as I began
Whan phebus wyf hadde sent for her lemman
Anoon they wrought alle thei2 lust bolage
This white crowe that hyng ay in the cage
Behelde thei2 werke and sayde neuir a worde
And whan home was come phebus the lorde
This crowe song cuckow cuckow cuckow

The manicles tale

What byrde quod phebus what syngeſt thou
Ne were thou nat wont ſo merſly to ſynge
That to my herte it was a reioyſynge
To here this boyce alas what ſonge is this
By god quod he I ſynge nat amys
Phebus quod he for alle thy worthynes
For alle thy beaute and thy gentylnes
For al thy ſonge and alle thy mynſtralſye
For al thy waytyng ſlerpd is thy eye
With one of lytel reputacioun
Nat worth to the in compariſoun
The mountenaunce of a gnat ſo moot I thyrue
For on thy hedde thy wyf I ſawe him ſwyue
What wol ye moze the crowe anon him tolde
By ſadde toknes and by wordes holde
How that his wyf hadde doon her lechery
Him to grete ſhame and to grete belony
And tolde him eft he ſawe it with his epen
This phebus gan a waywarde for to prpen
Him thought his woful hert braſt a two
His bowe he bent and ſet therein a ſto
And in his ire he hath his wyf ſlayn
This is the effecte ther is moze to ſayn
For ſorow wherof he brake his mynſtralſye
Bothe harpe and lute geterne and ſawtry
And eke he brake his arowes and his bowe
And aſter that thus ſpake he to the crowe
Traytoure quod he with tongue of ſcorpion
Thou haſt me brought to my confuſioun
Alas that I was wrought why nere I dede
O dere wyf o gemme o juſtifiede
That were to me ſo ſadde and eke to trewe
Now ſeſt thou dede with face pale of hewe

The manicles tale

ful gyltles that durst I swerely bys
• D rabel honde to do so foule amys
D trouble wytte o ire rechelesse
That vnaupsed spynnest gyltles
D wantrust fulle of false suspencion
where was thy wytte and thy discrecion
D euery man be ware of rechelnes
Ne trowe no thyng withoute strong wytnes
Sympte nat to sone oz thou wytte why
And be aupsed wele and sikerly
D z ye do any execucion
Upon poure ire for suspencion
Alas a thousand folke haue rekyll ire
fruyt fordoon and brought them in the myre
Alas for sorowe I wol my self slee
And to the crowe o false theef sayde he
I wol quyte anoon thy false tale
Thou song whilom lyke a nyghtyngale
Now shalt thou false theef thy song forgon
Eke thy white fetheres euerichone
Ne neuir in al thy lyf shalt thou speke
Thus shal men on a traytoure be wreke
Thou and thy offspryngeuiz shal be blake
Ne neuiz swete noyes shal ye make
But euir crye apenst tempest and rayne
In token that through the my wyf is slayn
And to the crowe he stert and that anoon
And pulled of his white fetheres euerichone
And made him blake and rest him al his song
And eke his speche and oute at the doze him song
Vnto the deupl whiche I him betake
And for this cause be al crows blake
Lorpynges by these ensamples I wol you pray

The manicles tale

Be ware and take kepe what I say
Ne tellith neur no man in poure lypf
No w that a nother man hath dight his wif
He wol pou hate mortally certayn
Dan Salamon as wyse clerkes sayn
Teuith a man to kepe his tongwe wele
But as I sayde I am nat teytuele
But natheles thus taught me my dame
My sonne thynke on the crowe a goddes name
My sone kepe wele thy tongwe and kepe thy frende
A wyched tongwe is worse than a feende
My sone from a feende men may them blesse
My sone god of his endeles goodnesse
Walled a tongwe with tethe and lyppes eke
For man sholde him auyse what he speke
My sone ful oft for to mehyl speche
Hath many a man be spylt as clerkes teche
But for lytel speche spoken auysedly
Is no man shent to speke generallly
My sone thy tongwe sholdest thou restrayn
At al tyme but whan thou doost thy peyne
To speke of god in honoure and prayer
The first bertue sone if thou wylt leze
Is to restreyn and kepe wele thy tongwe
Thus lerne children whan they be yong
My sone of mehyl spekyng be auysed
There lasse spekyng hadde ynough suffised
Cometh mehyl harme thus was me taughte
In mehyl speche synne wanteth naughte
Wotest thou wherfore a rabel tongwe seruyth
Right as a swerde forcutteth and foraruyth
An arme a tbow my dere sone right so
A tongwe cutteth frendshippe alle a trow

The parsonnes prologue

A iangeler is to god abhompnable
Rede Salamon so wyse and honouzable
Rede dauid and his psalmes. rede seneke
My sone speke nat ne with thy hede thou beke
Dissimyl as thou were des if that thou here
The iangeloure speich of parlous matere
The flemynge sayth lerne if that thou lyst
That lytel iangelynge causith grete rest
My sone if thou no wyched worde hast sayd
The dar nat drede for to be bewrayed
But he that hath mysseyde I dar wele sayn
He may by no wey clepe his worde agayn
Thynge that is sayde is sayde and forthe it goth
Though him repente or him be newe solothe
He is thralle to him to whom he hath sayde
A tale for whiche he is now euyl appayed
My sone be ware and be none autour ne we
Of tydinges whether they be false or trewe
Where so thou come among high or lowe
Kepe wele thy tounge and thynke on the crowe

Here endith the manciples tale
And begynneth the parsones prologue

By that the manciple hadde his tale endyd
The sounne fro the southe syde is disceded
So lowe that it was nat to my sight
Degrees of fyue and twenty of height
Ten at the cloke it was so as I gesse
For enleuyng foot a lytel more or lesse
My shadowe was at that tyme as there
Of suche feet as my length parted were
In sex feet equaly of proportion

The parsones prologue

Therwith the mones exaltacioun
I mene Libra alwey gan a scende
As were entryng in the thorpes ende
For whiche oure hoost as he was wont to gye
Ay in this caas this ioly company
Sayde in this wyse lordynges euerichone
Now lackith vs no tale moze than one
Fulspilled is my sentence and my decre
Who wol now telle a tale let se
Almoost fulspilled is myn ordenaunce
I pray to god so geue him right gode chaunce
That tellith this tale to vs lustily
Sir preest quod he art thou a bycary
Or art thou a parson say sothe by thyfey
Be what thou be here thou nat oure play
For eueri man saue thou haue tolde his tale
Unboke and shewe be what is in thy male
For truly me thyngkith by thy chere
Thou sholdest knyt by wele a grete matere
Tel vs a fable anoon for coches bones
This parson him aunswerd alle at onys
Thou gettyst fable none tolde for me
For poue that writeth to Tymothe
Repreueth them that wayuen sothfastnes
And tethen fables and suche wrechidnes
Why sholde I saue draue oute of myfyst
When I may saue whete if that me lyst
For whiche I say if that ye lyst to here
Moralite and of vertuous matere
And than if ye wyl geue me audience
I wolde ful fayne at cristes reuerence
Done poue lesful ple, aunce as I can
But trustith wele I am a sotheryn man

The parsonnes prologue

I can nat gese rum ram rus by lettre
And god wote ry me holde I but lytel better
And therfore if ye lust I wol nat glose
I wol you telle a lytel tale in prose
To knytte by al this feest and make an ende
And Jesu for his grace wytte me sende
To shewe you the wey in this bygge
Of thythe parspite glorious pylgrymage
That hight ierusalem celestiale
And if ye bouchesauf anon I shalle
Begynne upon my tale for whiche I pray
Tel youre aups I can no better say
But nathelesse this meditacioun
I put it ay vndre correctioun
Of clerkes for I am nat textuelle
I take but the sentence trustith wele
Therfore I make protestacioun
That I wol stonde to correctioun
Upon this worde we haue assentyd sone
For as it semyd it was for to doon
To enden in som vertuouse sentence
And for to geue him space and audience
And hadde oure hoost he sholde to him say
That alle we to telle his tale him pray
oure hoost hadde the wordes for vs alle
Sir preest quod he now sayre moot you befall
Sayth what ye lyst and we shal gladly here
And with that worde he sayd in this manere
Tellith quod he youre meditacioun
But hastith you the sonne wol adoun
Beth fructuous and that in lytel space
And to do wele god sende you his grace
Here endith the parsones prologue

The Persons tale

And here begynneth his tale



*Iheremie vi. State super vias et videte et interrogate de vñs antiquis.
que sit via bona. et ambulate in ea. et inuenietis refrigeriũ animabz vestris.*

o
O sweete lord God of
heue that no man wyl
perisse but wyl that
we come al to the kno-
wlechpung of hym and to the blyssful
lyf that is pardurable amonesteth
vs by the prophete Iheremie h saith
in this wyse. stondeþ vpon the we-
yes. and see a weye of olde pathis.
that is to saye of olde sentencis whi-
che is good weye. And walketh in h
weye and h is restreshpung for poure
soules. Many ben the weyes spiri-
tuel that leden folke to our lord ihu
Criste. And to the regne of glorie.

Of whiche weyes: There is a ful no-
ble weye and wel couenable whiche
may not faylle to man ne to womā
that thurgh synne hath misgoon fro
the ryght weye of Iherusalem celesti-
all. And this weye is cleped peni-
tence. Of whiche man shold gladly
herken and enquire wryth al his her-
te to wete. what is penitence or pe-
naunce. And wite whens is clepyd
penitence. And how many maners
ben the actions of wetchpung of pe-
nitence. And how many spyes the-
re be of penitence. and whiche thynges
behouen and apperteynen to.

penitence. Saynt ambrose sayth þ
penitence is the plenyng of the man
for the gylte that he hath doo.

And nomore to doo ony thyng for
the whiche hym ought to pleyne.

And som doctor sayth. that penaunce
is the wepyment pnyng of man that
soroweth for his synne. And pyneth
hym self for he hath mys don. Peni-
tence wyth certeyn circumstance is
betty repentaunce of man that hol-
deth hym self in sorowe & other pay-
r: for his gyltes. And for he shal
be betty penitent. He shal first be-
wapen the synnes that he hath don.

And stedfastly purpose in his herte
to haue shrift of mouth. And to doo
satisfaccion end neuer for to do thin-
ge for whiche hym onghte more to
bewaple or complayne. and to con-
tinue in good werkis. Dyllys his
repentaunce may not auaple. For
as saith saint Isodre. He is a Japar
and a gabbar and not betty repen-
taunce that estones doth thyng for
whiche hym oweth to repente ne fin-
te to doo synne. may not auaple.

But neuertheles men shold take ho-
pe that at euery tyme that men fal-
leth be it neuer so ofte that he may a-
ryse thourgh penitence yf he haue
grace. But certeynly it is grete
doubte. for as sayth Saynt Grego-
re. Synne the ariseth he out of his syn-
ne. that is charged of cruel usage.

And therfore repentaunce folke that
fynite for to synne and for to lete syn-
ne or synne forlete hym. Holy
chyrche holdeth hem spker of her sal-

uation. And he that synneth and
betty repenteth hym in hys laste.

Holy chyrche hoppeþ hys saluation
by the grete mercy of our Lord Ihu
Crist for his repentaunce.

But take ye the spker and certayn
wape. And now spke I haue de-
clared pow what thyng is penaunce

Now shul ye vnderstonde that
there be thre accions. The first is
that a man be baptised after that he
hath synneth. Saynt Augustyn
sayth but he be penitent for hys ol-
de synful lyp. He may not begynne
the newe clene lyp. For yf he be

baptised wythout penitence for his
olde gylte. He receyvethe the marke
of baptisme. But not the grace ne
the remysion of his synnes tyl he ha-
ue betty repentaunce. Another

defaute is that men done dedely syn-
ne after they haue receyued baptis-
me. The thirde defaute is that men
falle in venial synnes after her bap-

tisme fro day to day. Therof sayth
saynt Augustyn that penaunce of
good and humble folke is the peniten-
ce of euery day. The spyces of penan-
ce ben thre. That one of them is so-

lemne. Another is comen and the
thirde is pryue. That penaunce þ
is solemne is in two maners. as is to
be put out of holy chyrche in lenton

for slaughter of children and suche
maner thynges. Another is whan a
man hath synned openly. of whiche
synne the fame is openly knowen in
the contree and thence holy chyrche
by Jugement distreyneth hym for to

do open penance. Somme penance
is that prestes enioyne men come
ly in certayn caas as for to god per
auenture naked on pylgrymage or
barefoot. Pious penance is that men
doon al day for pius synner of whi
che we shryuen vs preuely and recey
uen pryncipal penance. Now shal
thou vnderstonde what behoueth &
is necessarye to euery pius penitent
And these stonde in thre. Contricion
of herte. Confession of mouth. And
satisfaction for whiche Iohan Luf
fostom sayth. Penitence distreyneth
to accepte benignly euery peyne þ is
hym enioyned wpyth contricion of
herte and shryfte of mouth wpyth sa
tisfaction and worshiping of alle ma
ner humylyte. And this is fructfull
penance agaynst tho thynges in whi
che we wrathe oure Lord Ihu cryst
This is to saue despyte in thynkyng.
By rechelesnes in spekyng. By wy
ked and synful worshiping. Agaynst
these wyked gyftes is penance.
That may be lykened to a tree. The
rote of this tre is contricion that hy
deth hym in the herte of hym that is
beray repentante ryght as the rote
of a tree hydeth hym in the erthe. Of
the rote of contricion spryngeth a
stalke that bereth branuchs & leues
of confession. And
the fleshe. Of whiche cryste sayth
in the gospel. Do ye dygne fruct off
penitence. For by thys fruct men
may knowe this tre and not by the
rote that is hyd in the herte of a man
Net by the branuchs ne leues of co

fession. And therefore oure lorde Ihu
Luffe sayth thus. By the fruct of
them ye shal knowe them. Of thys
rote spryngeth a seed of grace which
seed is moder of synners. And this
seed is eger & hote. the grace of thys
seed spryngeth of god through the re
menbrance of the day of dome & of
the peynes of helle. of this mater.
Salomon sayth that in the drede of
god a man forgettith his synne. The
hete of this seed is the loue of god &
despying of the Joye perdurable.
This hete draweth the herte of man
to god and doth hym hate his synne
for there is nothyng that sauoureth
so sote to a chyld as the mylke of
his nortre. Ne no thyng is to hym
more abhomyable than that myl
ke whan it is medyd wpyth other
mylke. Ryght so the synful man þ
loueth his synne. hit semeth it is to
hym most swete of ony thyng. But
fro þ tyme that he loueth sadly oure
lord Ihesu Cryst and despyeth the
lyf pardurable. There is to hym no
thyng more abhomyable. for soth
the loue of god is the lawe of god.
for whiche danyel the pphete sayth
I haue loued thy lawe & hated wy
kednes. he þ loueth god kepeth hys
lawe and his worde. This the pphe
te danyel enspired vpon the dyspon
of Nabogodonosor whan he coun
cyled hym to do penance. Penance
is of the tre of lyf to them that it
receyuen. & he that holdeth hym ver
ry penitent is blesyd after the sentence

of salamon In this penitence or con-
tricion man shal vnderstonde four
thynges. that is to saye what is con-
tricion. And whiche ben the causes þ
mouen a man to contricion. And
how he shold be contrite. And what
contricion availeth to the soule.

Then it is thus that contricion is the
very sorow that a man restrynteth
in his herte for his synnes wþ
purposse to shewe hym and to do pe-
nauce and neuer more to do synne
And this sorowe shal be in this ma-
ner as sayth saint Bernard. It shal
be greuous and hevy & wel sharpe
and poyntant in herte. fyrst for a
man hath agylted his lord and his
creator. And more sharpe and poy-
ntant for he hath agylted his fader
and mother. And yet more sharpe and
poyntant for he hath wrachyd hym
and agylted hym that bought hym þ
wþ his precious blood hath deli-
uered hym fro the bondes of synne
and fro the crueltie of the deuyl and
fro the paynes of helle These causes
that moue a man to contricion ben
thre.

fyrst a man shal remembre
hym of his synnes but so ke that re-
membrance be to hym no delite by
no weye but shame and sorowe for
his gylte for Job sayth synful men
don wel & ys worthy of confusion. &
therfor sayth Ezechiel. I wyl reme-
mber me al the yeres of my lyf in byt-
ternes of my herte. And god sayth in
the apocalips. Remembre yow fro
whens that ye be falle for before the

tyme that ye synned ye were the chil-
dren of god and symmys of the reg-
ne of god. But for your synne ye be
woven thral and ful menibus of the
fynne. Hate of angels. sclaundre
of holy chirche. And fode of the fals
serpent. perpetual matier of the fyre
of helle And that more foule and ab-
ominable for ye trespase as oft tyme
as doth the hound that touned
agayn to ete his owen spuyng.

And yet fouler for your long conty-
nuing in synne and your synful vi-
sage. for whiche ye be rotten in your
synnes as a beest in his dung. Su-
che maner thoughtes maketh a mā
a shamed for his synnes and no deli-
te as sayth the prophete Ezechiel. ye
shal remembre yow of your weyes.
and they shal dysplese yow. Sothely
synnes ben the weyes that lede folke
to helle. The second cause that ought
to make a man haue despayn of
synne is this as sayth Peter. who so
doth synne is thral to synne. And sin-
ne punieth a man in grete thraldom
And therfor sayth the prophete ezechiel
I wente sorowful and had disde-
payn of my self. Lette wel ought a
man haue dyspayn of synne and
wþ drawe hym fro that thraldom
and bylonye. for so what sayth se-
neke in this mater he sayth thus.

Though I wyl that neyther god ne
man shol neuer knowe it. yet wolde
I haue despayne for to doo synne:
And the same Benetie sayth I am
born to gretter thynges than to be

The Persons tale

shall to my body. more thral may
 no man ne woman make of his bo-
 dy than yee his body to spurne. and
 were it the foulest chouse or the fow-
 lest woman that lyueth and left off
 bawle. yet he is charged and moost
 foul & most in scrupitude euer fro the
 hyer degre that a man falleth. To
 more is he thral & more to god & to
 the world vile & abhomyable. Do
 good god wel ought a man haue dis-
 deygne of spurne syth that thourgh h
 there as he was fre now is he made
 bonde And therfore sayth saynt Aus-
 tyn. yf thou hast disdaygne of thy ser-
 uant. yf he agyle or spurne haue
 thou thenne no disdaygne that thou
 thy self sholdest do spurne. Take re-
 warde of thy owen bawle h thou
 ne be to foul to thy self ne to thy.
 Alas we oughten they that haue dis-
 dayn to be seruantes & thral to spurne
 Dore to be ashamed of him self: that
 god of his endles goodnes hath sette
 in hygh estate or yee hym stenthe
 of body. beaute. prosperyte & boughte
 hym fro the deeth wpth his herte blod
 that they so vnkynedly agaynst his
 gentylnes quytten them so vpleysly
 to slaughter of her owen sowlys. O
 good god yee wyminen that ben of
 grete beaute remembre yow on the
 prouerbe of Salamon he sayth he
 lykeneth a fair womā that is a fool
 of her body to a rynge of golde that
 is worn in the groyn of a sowe. For
 right as a sowe wrotyth in euery or-
 dure. so wrotyth she her beaute in sin
 lynnng ordure of spurne. The thirde

cause that ought to meue a man to
 contricion is drede of the day of do-
 me And the horryble peynes of helle
 for as saith saynt Jerome. At euery
 tyme h I remember of the day of do-
 me I quake for whā I cte or dypnke
 or do what so I do. euer me semeth
 the trompe so wicth in myn ctes.
 Ryseth vp h ben dede and come ye to
 the Iugement. O good god moche
 ought a man to drede suche a Iuge-
 ment there as we shal be al. As saith
 saynt Poule. Before the strait Ju-
 gement of our Lord Ihesu Cryste.
 where as we shal make a general cō-
 gregaciō wher as no mā may be ab-
 sente. For certes there awaylcth none
 esoyne ne non excusaciō & not only
 that our fautes shal be Iuged but
 eke our werkes shal openly be kno-
 wen. And h as sayth saint Bernard
 There ne shal no pletynge awayle ne
 no slepyght. we shal yee reknynge
 of euery yde worde. Ther shal we
 haue a Iuge that may not be decey-
 uyd ne corrupt. and why for: certes al
 our thoughtes be discouerd as to
 hym. ne for prayer ne for mede. He
 wyl not be corrupt And also he saith
 The wrath of god wyl not spare no
 wyght for prayer ne for yest. And
 therfore atte day of dome there is no
 ne hope. wherfore as saith saynt An-
 celme. ful grete angrysshe shal the
 synful folk be haue at that tyme whe-
 re shal be the sterne & wroth Iuge sit-
 tyng about & vnder hym the horry-
 ble pyt of helle open to destroye hym
 that wold not beknowe his synnes

The Persons Tale

Whiche synnes shullen openly be shewyd before god & every creature. And on the left syde mo deuyllis that the herte may thynke for to harrye & drawe the synful soules to the pytie of helle. And wythin the hertes of folke shal be the betyng conscience. & wythout fowth shal his werkes accuse hym. Whanne shal the wretchyd soule fle to hyde hym. But certes he may not hyde hym he must come forth & shew hym for certes as saith saynt iherome. the erthe shal cast him out of hym and the see also and the ayer also that shal be ful of thunder clappis & lyghtryng. Now sothly who so wol remembre hym of thysse thynges I gesse that his synnes shal not tourne hym to despyte but to grete sorowe fro drede of the peyn of helle. And therefore sayth Job to god. Suffre lord þ I may a while bewaile & bewepe or I go retorning to the derk erthe & coueryd wpyth derkenes the lond of myserye and of derkenes wher as is shadow of deith wher as there is none other ordeynance but gressly drede that euer shal laste. Lo here may ye see that Job prayd respyte a while to bewepe and wayle his trespass. for sothly one day to respyte is better than alle the tresour of this world. And for as moche as a man may accuse hym self by fore god by penitence in thys world and not by tresour. Therefore sholde he praye to god to peure hym respyte a while to bewepyn and bewepyn his trespass. for certes all

the sorowe that a man myght make fro the begynnyng of the world vnto but a lytyl thyng at the regarde of of the sorow of helle. The cause why that Job clepeth the lond of derkenes vnderstondeyth that he clepeth it lond or erth for it is stable & neuer shal fayle derkenes. for he that is in helle hath defaute of lyght naturel. for certes the derke lyght that shal come out of the fore that euer shal be brenne shal come hym al to pyne þ he be in helle. for it sheweth hym al the horryble deuylls that thyn tomentre couerid wpyth the derkenes of deith þ ben the synnes þ the wretchyd man hath doon. whiche that destourben hym to see the face of god. I praye as a derke cloude betwene vs and the sonne. Lond of mysef by cause þ there be thre defautes agynste thre thynges that folke of this world haue in this present lyf that is to saye honouris. despytes. & ryches. Agynst honour haue they in hell shame and confucion. for wel ye wote they despyen honour the reuerence that men don to men. But in helle is non honour ne reuerence for certes no more reuerence shal be there to a kynge than a knawe. for whiche god saith by the prophete iheremye. The folke that we dispyse shal be in despyte. Honour is eke clepyd a grete lordshipp ther shal no wyght serue other but of harme & turnete. Honour is eke clepyd grete dygnyte & hyghnes. But in helle shal they alle be fowtrod wpyth deuylls as god sayth. The

horryble demyelles shullen go and co-
wynn upon the he:ps of dampnyd
folke And this is for as moche that
the hert that they were in present lyf
the more they shul be abated & defo-
wled in helle. against the riches of this
world shal they haue mysese of po-
uerte. And this pouerte shal be in fo-
re thynges in defaute of tresour off
whiche Dauid sayth. The riche fol-
ke embriach & couete in al her herte
the riches of this world shul slepe in
the slippynge of deth. as no thing shul
they fynde in there hondes of al her
tresour And more ouer the mysese of
helle shal be in defaute of mete and
drynke for god sayth thus by moy-
ses. shal be wasted with hunger.
And the byrdes of helle shal deuoure
hem with bytter deth. And the galle
of the dragon her morellys. And
further ouer her mysese shal be in de-
faute of clothyng for they shal be na-
kyd in body as of clothyng. Saue
the fyre in which they brenne & other
fylthes And naked shal they be in so-
wle of a maner vertues. whiche that
is the clothyng of soule. where ben
thene the gay robes & the softe she-
tis and fyn shertis. Lo what saith
god of them by the pphete ysai. h
Under them shal be strawed mothes
& her couertours shal be of woundes
of helle. And fouthrouer her mysese
shal be in defaute of frendes for he is
not poure that hath good frendys.
But there is no frende. for neyther
god ne good creature shal be frende

to them. And euery of hem shal hate
other with dedely hate. The sones &
the daughters shal rebelle against the
fader and moder. And kynrede
against kynrede and chyden and des-
pyse eche other both day and nyght
as god sayth by the prophete myc. 2.
as. And the lounyng chyden by
me tyme loueden so flesshly eueryche
of them wold ete other yf he myght.
for how shold they loue to gyder in
the peynes of helle. whan they hated
eche other in the prosperite of this lyf
for truste wel her flesshly loue is de-
dely hate as sayth the prophete Da-
uid who so lounyth wyckednes he ha-
teth his owen soule. And who so
hateth his owen soule. Certes he
may loue none other wyght in noo
manere And therfore in helle is noo
frendshyp But euery the more cursing
the more chydynge and the more dede-
ly hate is among them. And further
ouer they shal haue defautes of alle
maner despytes. for why. for despytes
ben appetytes of the wittes as syght
heryng. smellynge. sauourynge. and
touchynge. But in helle her syghte shal
be ful of derlines. of smoke and ful
of teris. And her heeryng ful of wep-
mentynge and of gruntynge of sceth
as sayth Ihu cryste her nostrylles
shal be ful of synkyng.
And as sayth ysai the pphete. her
sauourynge shalle be full of bytter
galle. And as touchynge her body hit
shal be couerdyd with fyre that neuer
shal be quenched And with woundes

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that neuer shal deye as god sayth by the mouth of ysaye. & for as moche as they shul not wene þ they mo we deye for peyn & by deeth fle for peyn þ may they vnderstonde in the worde of Job that sayth that there is þa: do we hath a lyknes of the thing of which it is shadowed. right so fareth the peyne of helle. it is lyke deeth for the angurysse horrible. & why. for it peyneth them euer as though men shold deye anon. But certes they shal not deye. for saynt gregore sayth. to carterys shal be deeth wythout deeth & ende wythout ende & defaute. wythout sayling for her deeth shal alway lyue. And her ende shal euer more be gyne. & her defaute shal neuer fayle. And therfore sayth saynt Iohan the Euangeliste. They shal folow deeth and they shal not fynde hym and to desyre to deye & deeth shal fle fro them. And eke Job sayth that in helle is non ordre of rewele. And al be it so þ god hath created al in right ordre. & nothyng wythout ordre. But al thynges be ordeyned and nomged. yet ne uertheles they þ be dampned be noo thyng in ordre ne holde non ordre.

for the erthe shal bere them no fruyt. for as the prophete Dauid sayth. God shal destrope the fruyt of the erthe from them. He water shalle yene hem no moysture ne the eyer no refreshyng. ne the fyre no lyght.

for as sayth saynt Basyle. The burning of the fyre of this worlde shal god geue to hem that ben damp

ned in helle. But the lyght & the clerenes shal be geuen in heuyn to his chyl dren. Right as the good man geueth brede to his chyl dren & bones to his houndes. And so they shal haue non hope to escape. And therfore speketh Job. Atte last there shal honour and gressy brede dwellen wythouten ende. Honour is alway brede of harme that is to come. And this brede shal euer dwelle in the hertes of them that ben dampned. And therfor haue they lost al her hope for bi. causes. first for god þ is her Iuge shal be wythouten mercy to them. ne they may not please hym ne non of his halowes ne may peye nothyng for thei ranson ne they haue no bops to speke to hym. ne they may not fle fro peyne. And therfore sayth salamon. the wycked man depeeth. & whā he is dede he shal haue none hope to escape. from peyne. who so wold wel vnderstonde these peynes and betsynke hym wel that he hath deseruyd the peynes for his synnes. Certes he shold haue more talent to sygne and wepe than for to synge and for to piepe. for as sayth Salamon. who that hath seyn eue for to knowe peynes that ben establisshyd and ordeyned for synne he wold forsake synne. That science sayth saynt Austyn maketh a man to wepen in his herte. The fourth point that a man ought to make contricion for. is the sorowful remembraunce of the good that he hath lest to doo here in erthe and

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the good that he hath lost. Both by the good works that he hath left either they be the good works that he wrought or he fell in to dedely synne or elles the good works þ he wrought whyle he laye in dedely synne.

Bothelþ the good that he dyd before ne that he fell in dedely synne ben all monthefed astoned & dulled by the est synning. The other works that he wrought whyle he laye in synne ben utterly dede as to the lyf perdurable in heuen. Than thylke good works that ben monthefed by est synning whiche good works he did whyles he was in charyte mo we neuer quenchen aghen wþhout bereyng streynt and wþdrawyng the strenges of manys corage and the meangenges in his herte in suche manere as they ne skyppe out by anger ne by pry. And therof sayth god by the mouth of ezechiel. That yf the right ful man retorne agayn from his right wysnes and to wyche wyckednes shal he lyuen nay. For al the good works that he hath wrought shulle neuer be in remembrance.

For he shal deye in his synne. And by þon that chapitre sayth saynt Gregory thus that we shul understonde pryncipally that whan we doo dedely synne it is nought. Nether so: to drawe in to memoire the good works that we haue wrought byforn. For certis in the working of dedely synne there is no tyste to good work that we haue doon before. That

is to saye as to haue ther by the lyf perdurable in heuen. But bothelþ the good works that men don whyles they ben in dedely synne for as myght as they were don in dedely synne they may neuer quench. For certes thinges þ neuer hade lyf may neuer quench. And neuertheless al be it þ they auayle not to haue the lyf perdurable. yet auaylen they to a bryd ge of the peyn of helle. Or elles to gete temporal riches. or elles that god wyl rather enuie and lyghten the herte of the synfull man to haue repentaunce. And eke they auayle to a man to doo good works that the fende haue the lasse power of his sorwe. And thus the curteis lord Ihesu Criste wyl that no good work bee losse. For in somewhat it shal auayle. But for as moche that the good works that men don whyles they ben in good lyf ben al monthefed by synne folowynge. And eke sythe al the good works that men doon whyles they be in dedely synne ben utterly dede as for to haue the lyf pardurable. wel may that man that no good work doth syng that fresh newe songe. Iay tout perdur mon temps et mon labour.

For certes it bereueth a man goodnes and nature and eke the goodnes of grace. for soth the grace of the holy goost fareth as fyre that may not be yde. For fyre sayleth anon as it leseth his workynge. Than leseth the synful man the goodnes of glorie that only is bechoten to goode

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men that labourer & worker. wel may he be forp themne that oweth al his lpf to god as long as he lyueth. And eke as long as he shal lyue. þu no goodnes hath to paye wyth his dette to god to whom he oweth al his lpf. for trust wel he shal pene aroun-
 tps. as sayth saynt Bernard. Of all the goodes that haue be geuen hym in this present lpf. And how he hath despended them not so moche þu there shal perpysshe an hert of his hert ne a moment of an houre that he ne shal pene therto of a rekyng. The fyfte thyng is that ought to meue a man to contricion is remembraunce of the passion that our lord Ihu cryst suffryd for our synnes. for as sayth saynt Bernard. whyles that I lyue I shal haue remembraunce of the traueyls that our lord Ihu cryst suffryd in prechyng. his werkes in traueylng. his temptacions whan he fasted. his long wakinges whan he prayd. his teiris whan he wepte for pyte of good peple. the woo and the shame and the fylthe that men sayden to hym of the foule spyttyng þu men spytten in his face. of the buffet tps þu men gaf hym of the foule moutis and of the foule trepcups þu men to hym sayden. of the nayles wyth the whiche he was nayled to the crosse And of alle the remenaunt of his passion that he suffryd for mannis synne and nothyng for his gylte. And þu shal vnderstonde that euery master orde of ordeynance is turned vp so down. for it is soth that god &

reson and sensualyte and the body of a man ben so ordeyned. that euery tpe of thysse four thynges shuld haue lordship ouer þu other as thus god shold haue lordship ouer resō. & resō ouer sensualyte ouer the body of mā but sothly in man semeth al this order of ordeynance is turned vp so down. And therfore therue for as my lyl as the reson of man wyl not be subget ne obeysaunt to god that is lord by ryght. Therfore leseth it the lordshipp that it sholde haue in sensualyte and eke ouer the body of man And why for sensualyte rebellith the ne a peny reson. And by that weyle-
 syth reson his lordshipp ouer sensualyte and ouer the body.

for ryght as reson is rebel to god Ryght so is sensualyte rebell to reson and the body also.

And certes thys ordeynance. And thys rebellyonoure Lorde Ihesu Cryst aboughte vpon his body well deer. And herkeneth in whiche wyse

for as my lyl theme as reson is rebell to god therfore is man worthy to haue sorowe and to be dede.

This suffryd our Lord Ihesu for man after he was betrayed of hys discyples and distrened and bounde so that the bloode drafft out at euery nape of hys hondes. As sayth saynt Augustyn. & fethermore for as my lyl as reson of man wyl not daunte sensualyte whan it may.

Therfore is man worthy to haue shame And this suffred oure Lorde Ihu cryst for man whan they spytte

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in his Byfage. And fetther ouer the
ne for as moche as the captif Body
of man is rebel both to reſon and to
ſensualite therfor it is worthy the deſth
And this ſuffred our Lord Ihu criſt
for ma vpon the croſſe. wher as ther
was no parte of his Body ſtre woth
out grete peyn & bytter paſſion. And
at this ſuffred Iheſu criſt that neuer
forgetteth. To moche am I peyned
for tho thynges that I neuer deſer
upd and to my ſyl defouled for ſin
ſhipp that man is worthy to haue.
And therfor may the ſynfull man
wel ſaye as ſaint Bernard ſayth.
A corſyd be the bytterneſſe. For certes
after dyuerſe dyſcordaunces of our
wickednes was the paſſion of Ihu
Cryſt ordeyned in dyuerſe thynges
as thus Certes ſynful mannis
ſoule betrayed the deuyll by couerſe
of temporal proſperyte and ſcumes
by deſceyt whan he cheſith fleſſhly de
lytes. & is tormented by Impatience
of aduerſyte & beſpet by ſeruage in
ſubiectiō of ſynne. & atte laſt he is
ſlayn ſynally. For this dyſcordaun
ce of ſynful man. was Iheſu Cryſt
firſt betrayed. And after h was he
bound that cam for to vnbrynde vs
of ſynne & of the peyne. Thene was
he beſcōurged h only ſhold be honou
ryd in al thynges & of alle thynges.
Thenne was his Byfage beſpytte h
ought to be deſpyred for to be ſeyn of
al mankynde. In whiche Byfage
aungels deſpyren to loke. and therin
was vilenſſy beſpette Thene was

he ſcōurged h no thyng had gylt. And
ſynally thenne was he crucyſſed
and ſleyn. Thenne were accompliſhed
the wordes of yſaye that ſayth. He
was wounded for our myſdedes &
defouled for our bylonyes. Now
ſyth h Ihu Cryſt toke on hym ſelf
the peyne of al our wickednes. my
ſyl ought ſynful man to wepe & to
bewaylle that for his ſynnes goddis
ſone of heuen ſhold al this peyne en
dure. The vi. thyng that ought
to meue a man to contricion is the
hope of thre thynges that is to ſaye
forgeuēnes of ſynne. and the peſſe of
grace wel for to doo. And the ioye of
heuen woth the whiche god ſhal ge
erdon man for his good dedes. And
for as moche as Iheſu Cryſt peueſh
vs the peſſe of his grace and of his
ſouerayn bowite. Therfor is he de
pyd Iheſus nazarenius rex Judeor
Iheſus is for to ſay ſauyōr or ſalua
cion on whom man ſhal hope to ha
ue forgeuēnes of ſynnes. which that
is pperly ſaluacion of ſynnes. And
therfor ſaid the aungel to Joſeph
Thow ſhalt clepe his name Iheſus h
ſhal ſaue his peple of her ſynnes. &
herof ſaith ſeynt Peter. Ther is none
other name vnder heue h is peuen to
ony man by whiche a man may be
ſauyōd but only Iheſus. nazarenius
is as moche to ſaye as for flouriſhing
in whiche a man ſhal hope that he h
peueſh hym remyſſyō of ſynnes ſhal
alſo peue hym grace wel for to doo.
For in the flour is hope of ſcuyt

In tyme comyng. And in foryeuene
of synne hope of grace wel to doo.
I was et dore of thyn herte said ihe
sus a cleped for to entre. he that ope
neth to me shal haue foryeuene of
synnes I wyl entre in to him by my
grace. and suppe wyth hym by the
good werkes that he shal do whiche
werkes ben the fode of god. And he
shal soupe wyth me by the grete iope
that shal be yeten to hym. Thus
shal man hope that for his werkes
of penaunce god shal yete hym hys
regne as he behoteh hym in the gos
pel. Now shal man vnderstonde in
what maner shal be his gtyad I say
hit shal be vnyuersal & total. þis is to
saye a man shal be vray repentaunt
for alle his synnes that he hath don
in despyte of his thought. For despyte
is perpylous. For ther be two maners
of consentynge that one of them is
cleped consentynge of assention. whā
a man is meued to do synne a penyte
the lawe of god. Al though his reson
consente not to do synne in dede. yet
seyn som doctours and men that su
the despyte that dwelpeþ longe is full
perpylous. al be it neuer so lyte. And
also a man shold sorow namely for
al þe euyl he hath despyed a penyte the
lawe of god wyth parspeth conspn
tyng to the dede wherfore I say that
many men repente hem neuer of su
the thoughtes and despytes and neuer
shryue hem of it but only of the dede
of grete synnes outward. wherfor I
saye that suche wycked despytes and

wicked thoughtes ben subtyl begy
lars of them that shalle be dawning
Dore ouer man ought to sorow for
his wycked wordes and for his wic
ked dedes. For certes repentaunce of
a spynuler synne and not repentyng
of alle his other synnes. or elles re
pentyng hym of alle his other syn
nes & not of a spynuler synne may
not anaylle. For certes god al
myghty is al good. And therfore he
foryeueth al or elles right nought.
And therfore sayth saynt Austyn I
wote certeply that god is enemye
to euery synnar. And how than he b
obserueth one synne. Shal he haue
foryeuene of the remanent of his o
ther synnes. nay. a fetherouet cotri
cion shold be wonder sorowful and
anguysshous. & therfore penyeth hym
god pleynt his metty. & therfor whā
my soule was anguysshous wyth
me I had remembraunce of God þy
prayer myght come to hym. Forther
ouer contriciō must be cotryued & þ
men haue stedfast purpose to shryue
hem & for to amende hem of her lyff.
Forsothly whyle contricion lasteth
man may haue hope of foryeuene
And of this cometh hate of synne þ
destroyet synne both in hym self & e
lik in other folke at his power. For
whiche Dauid saith. ye that louen
god. hate wyckednes. For trusted
wel to loue god is for to loue that he
loueth and hate that he hateth.

At last thyng that a man shal
vnderstonde in contricion is thys.

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Wherof auayleth contricion. I saye
somtyme that contricion despuereth
a man fro synne. Of whiche dauid
sayth. I say quod dauid. I purpose
fermly to shryue me and thou lord
hast reyd my synne. And rpght so
as contricion auayleth not wpythout
sayd purpose of shryfte and satisfac
tion. rpght soo confessyon ne satis
faction auayle not wpythout contri
cion. For moche contricion destro
yeth the pryson of helle and maketh
werk and feble the strenth of the de
uyl. And restoreth the pestre of the
holy ghoost and of alle vertues and
Interdenyeth the soule of synne and
despuereth the soule fro peyne of hell
and fro the company of the deuyl.
And fro seruage of synne. And resto
ryth to alle gooones spiritual in to
the companye and comunyon of
holy chyrche. And fether ouer hit
maketh hym that whylom sone of
yre. to be the sone of grace. And alle
these thynges he putteth to holy writ
And therfore he that wyl sette his en
tente to thysse thynges he were ful wi
se. For therne he shold not in al his
lyf haue corage to synne But therne
his body and alle hys herte. he shold
consourme to the scrupse of Ihu cris
te. And therfore do hym homage for
certes our swete Lord Ihesu Cryste
hath sparyd vs so benygaly in oure
folyes that yf he ne had pite on man
nys soule. A forp songe myght we
alle syng.

Explicit prima pars penitencie.

Incipit secunda pars.

The second parte of penitence
is confessyon and that
is sygne of contricion.

Now shal ye vnderstonde what is
confessyon. and whether it ought ne
des to be or none. and whiche thyng
ges ben couenable to berry confessy
on. fyrst shalt thou vnderstonde þ
confessyon is berry shewyng of syn
ne to the prest. this is to saye berry.
For he must confesse hym of alle the
condicions that be longynge to hys
synne as fersouth as he can. al must
be sayd and nothyng excused ne hid
ne forwrappid and not auauite hym
of hys good werks. And fether
uer it is necessarye to vnderstonde
whens that synnes spryngen.

And how they encreasen. and ther ben
spryngyng of synnes as sayth samit
Poule in this wyse. That right as
by a mā synne entryd first in to this
world. And thurgh that synne deyde
Rpght so deeth entryd in to alle men
that synned. And this man was
adam by whom þ synne entrid in to
this world whan he brake the com
maundement of god. & therfor he that
first was so myghty þ he sholde not
deyed. Becam suche one that he must
nedes deye whether he wold or noo &
al his pgenye þ is in this world that
in þ maner synne deyen. loke þ in the
state of inoçence whā ada & eue were
naked in paradise & no sham had of
her nakednes. how þ þ serpēt þ was
most wply of al other bestys þ god
had made said to the womā gñaded
god to you ye shold not etc of euery

tre in paradysse. The woman answered of the fruyt sayd she of the trees in paradysse we feden vs. But sothly of the fruyt of the tre that is in the myddel of paradysse. God forbade vs for to eten ne to touche it lest perauenture we shal dye. The serpent sayde to the woman: nay. nay. ye shal not dye of deeth. For soth god wote that what day that ye ete thereof your eyen shalle open and ye shal be as goddes knowynge good and hatyn. The woman sawe that the tree was good to fedynge and fayre to the eye and delectable to the syght. She took of the fruyt of the tre and ete of it. And gaf of it to her husbonde. And he ete. And anon the eyen of them both openyd. And whan they knewe that they were naked. They sowyd of a figg tree scrups in maner of brechis to hyden her membris.

Here may ye see that dedely synne hath first subiectyon of the sence. As shewyth here by the adder. And afterward the delyte of the flesh as shewyth here by Eve. And after by consentynge of reson as shewyth by Adam. For trust wel though so were the sence one clemptyd that is to saye the flesh And fruyt of satysfaction had delyte in beaute of the fruyt defendyd. yet certes tyl that reson that is to saye. Adam consentyd to the etynge of the fruyt. He stode bygh in the state of Innocence. Of that Adam toke we that synne original. For of hym flesshly descended ben we al and engendryd of vile

corrupt mater. and whan the soule is put in our body right anon is contracted original synne. It was only payne of concupyscence. whiche is afterward both payne and synne. And therefore be we al born sonnes of wretched and of dampnatyon perdurable yf we were baptysme that we receyue whiche benymeth vs the cuple. But forsoth the paynes dwelle wyth vs as the temptation. whiche payn byghst concupyscence. And this concupyscence whan it is wrongfully disposed or ordeyned in man. Hit maketh hym couerpte couetyse of flessh and flesshly synne by syght of his eyen as to the earthely thynges.

And ete couetyse of hyghnes by pryde of herte. Now as for to speke of the first couetyse that is concupyscence after the lawe of our membris were lawfully made and by ryghtful Jugement of god. I saye for as moche as a man is not obeyssaunt to god that is his lord. Therefore is his herte to hym dysobeyssaunt through concupyscence. Hit is impossible but he be tempted som tyme and noyed in his flesh to synne. And this thyng may not fayle as longe as he lyueth. Hit may wel wepe feble and fayle by vertu of baptysme.

And by the grace of god through penytence. But fully shal it neuer queneche. That he ne shal somtyme be meuryd in hymself but yf he were all restryed by sykennes or by malice of forsetye.

or colde drynkes. For what sayth
saynt Paule. The flesh coueteth a-
penst the spirite. & the spirite apenst
the flesh they ben so contrarie. And
so stryuen that man may not doo al
leway as he wolde. The same saynt
Paule after his grete penaunce in
water and in sonde by nyght and by
day by grete payn and in grete pain
in sonde in grete samyn and thrist in
colde and ones stoned almost to deeth

yet sayd he alas I catyf man.
Who shal despuet me fro the pryson
of my catyf body. And saynt Ihesus
crist sayd. Whan he long tyme hade
dwellyd in desert wher as he had no
cōpari but bestes wher as he had no
mete but herbis & water to his dunke-
ne no bed but the naked erthe. For
whiche his flesshe was black as an
ethyope for hete & destroyed so colde
yet sayd he the brennyng of secherye
hoppled in alle his body. wherfor I
wote wel splyctly that they be decey-
ued that saye that they be not temp-
ted in her sede spryngyng. As well
may a chow be saupe as the lord the
same deeth & the chowle takyth the
lorde takyth. wherfore I re-
de doo ryght so by thy chowle.

As thou woldest they lord dyd wryth
the yf thou were in his pryght.

Eury synful man is chowle to syn-
ne I rede she certes thou lord & thou
rewle the in such wyse that the chow-
les rather loue the thenne hate the.

I wote wel there is degre aboue de-
gre as reyon is and skyll is & men
doo her deuoyer there as it due. But

certes extorions & despyte of youre
Bnderlynges is dampnable. And
furthemoze Bnderstonde well that
cōquerours or tyrantis maken wel
ofte thrallys of them that ben borne
of as ryall blood as they that them
conquerryn.

This name of
thraldom was neuer knowen crist-
tyl that Noe sayd. His sone canaan
shold be thral to his brythern for his
synne. What saye we thenne of them
that pylle and do extorions to holy
chirche.

Certes the swerde that
men geuen first to a knyght whan
he is newe dubbid signefyeth that he
shold defende holy chirche and not
robb them.

And who
soo doth is a traytour to Cryste as
sayth Saynt Austyn. Tho ben
the deuellys wolys that strangelyn
the sheep of Ihesu Cryste and doon
worst than wolys.

For soth whan the wolf hath ful his
wombe he stenteth to strangle sheep.

But sothly the pylours and dis-
troyers of goodes of holy chirche
do not so. For they stynte neuer
to pylle.

Now haue I said syn
soo is that synne was fyrst cause of
thraldom and subiectiō.

But certes syth the tyme of grace
cam. God ordeyned that som folke
shold be made more in hygh degre.
& som falk more lowe state and hy-
gher. And that eueriche shold be
seruyd in hye state and his degre.
And therfor in som countres there as
they ben thrallys. whan they haue
toined hem to the feith they make her

Thralles free out of thraldom. And therfor certes the lord o'weth to hys man. that the man o'weth to the lord. The pope clep yth hym self seruaunt of seruaunt of god. But for as moche as the state of holy chyrche myght not be kept in reste ne in pees in erthe. But yf god had ordeyned þ som men haue hys degre. And som men lower. Therefore was soue raynte ordeyned to kepe and mayntene and defende her vnderlynges or her subiectes in reson as fer south as it lyeth in her power. And not to destroye hem ne confounde. wherfor I saie thylle lordes ben woluyng that deuouryn the possessyons or the catel of other folke wrongfully wythout mercy or mesure. They shul be releyd by the same mesure that they haue mesured to poure folke for the mercy of Ihesu Cryste but they it amende. Now shul ye vnderstonde in what maner synne weyeth and encreaseth in man. The first thyng is þ norysshing of syn of which I spak byfore that is concupcense. And after that cometh subiectyng of the deuyl that is to saie the deuyls belowe. wyth which he bloweth in man the fyre of concupcense. And after that a man be thynketh hym whether he wold doo or no that thyng to whiche he is tempted And than yf that a man wythstonde and weye the first tryng of his flesshe and of the fende. than it is no synne. And yf so be he do not than feleth he anon

a flame of despyte. And than it is good to be waar & to kepe hym well or elles he wyl falle anon in to consentyng of synne. And than wyl he do it yf he may haue tyme & space. And of this mater sayth Moyses by the deuyl in this maner. The fende sayth I wyl chace and purswe the mā by wyckyd suggestyon. and I wyl honte hym by meuryng or tryng of synne. And I wyl departe my pryse or my pray by despytacion. And my lyf shal be accomplisshed in despyte. I wyl drawe my swerde in consentyng. For certes right as a swerde departeth one in two perys. Right so consentyng departeth god from man. And thenne wyl I slee hym wyth my honde in deth off synne. Thus sayth the fende. For certes theuere is a man al dede in soule. And thus is synne complisshed by temptation. by despyte and by consentyng. And theuere synne is cleped a metuaylle. For soth synne is in two maners. either it is venial or deadly synne. Bothly whan a man loueth ony creature more than Ihesu Cryste our creatour theuere it is deadly synne. And venial synne yf a man loue Ihesu cryste lesse than hym ought. Forsothe the dede of this venial synne is ful perylous for it amynusith the loue that men shold haue to good more. And therfor yf a man charge more hym self wyth many suche venial synnes. certis but if so be that he discharge of them by shryft.

they may well lyghely amenuise in hym al the loue that he hath to Ihesu cryste. And in this wyse slippeth Venyal synne in to the dedely synne for certes the more that a man chargeth his soule wpyth Venyal synnes the more is he inclined to dedely synne. & therfore let vs not be negligent in dischargyng vs of Venyal synne. For the prouerbe sayth many smale maketh a grete. And herkenne this ensawple A grete warre of the see cometh somtyme wpyth a grete a vpo- leuce that it drenchyth the shyp. And the same hatene doo somtyme the smale dropes of water. That entre thurgh a lytyl creups in the thur- rok and in the botom of the shyp yf me be so neglygent h they dyscharge hem not by tyme. And therfore al though there be difference betwene thysse two causes of drenchyng yet al gates the shyp is dreynt. ryght so sa- tishe it somtyme of dedely synne & of anopous Venyal synnes whā they multiplie in man so grete that the woulde thynge h he loueth thugh whiche he synneth Venyal is as gre te in his herte as the loue of god or more. And therfore the loue of euery thyng that is not beset ue don prynci- pally for goddes sake. Al though a man loueth lasse than god. yet is it Venyal synne. And dedely synne is whā the loue of any thyng weyeth in the herte of man as moche as the loue of god or more. Dedely synne as sayth saynt Augustyn is whan a

man turneth his herte from god whi- che that is betwixt souerayn bownde h may not be changed. And peneth his herte to a thyng that may chaun- ge and flytte. And certes that is eue- ry thyng saue god of heuen. Forsoth yf that a man yue his loue whiche he oweth to god wpyth al his herte in to a creature certes so moche of loue as he yueth to suche a creature. soo moche betwixt he fro god. And therfore doth he synne. for he that is dettour to god ne yeldeth not alle his dette to god that is to saye alle the lo- ue of his herte. Now syth a man vn- derstondeh generallly whiche is ve- nyall synne Than is it couenable to tellespecyally of synnes whiche that many a man perauenture demeth hem not synnes and shryueth them not of the same synnes. And yet neuertheles they be synnes. And soth- ly as clerkes wryten this is to say h euery tyme that a man eteth & dryn- keth more than suffyseth to suste- naunce of his body certeyn he doth synne. Eke whan he harkeneth not the compleynt of the poure men. Eke whan he speareth more than it nedeth it is synne Eke whan he is in helthe of body & wyl not faste whan other men faste wpythout cause reso- nable. Eke whan he slepeth more than nedeth. or whan he cometh by h enchosyn to late to churche or to other werkis of charyte. Eke whan he vs- seth his wyf wpythouten desyre soue- rayn of engendrure to thconcur off

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god or for the love to please his wyf the
 dette of his body. & he whan he wyl
 not bysite the spye or the prysoners
 whan he may. & he yf he loue wyf
 or childe or any other worldly thyng
 more than reson requyret. & he yf he
 flattere or blaundyse more than hy
 ought for any necessity. & he yf he a
 meruse or wythdrawe the almes of
 the poure. & he yf he aparyle hy
 mete more delciously than nede is
 or ete it to hastily by sychorousnes.
 & he yf he talke banteres in the chir
 che or at goddes scrupse or that he be
 a talker of yde wordes of foly or
 of vyloupe. for he shal yue acoun
 tes of it at the day of dome. & he
 whan he behoteth or assureth to doo
 thynges that he may not performe.
 & he whan he spyghtes of folpe mis
 seyeth or scorneth his neyghbour.
 & he whan he hath any wycked sus
 peccion of thyng there be woot of but
 no sothfastnes. These thynges and
 moo wythouten nombre be synnes
 as sayth saynt Austyn. Now shal
 we vnderstonde that al be it soo that
 none crithly man may eschewe al ve
 nyal synnes. yet may he refrene hym
 by the bremyng loue that he hath to
 our lord Ihesu cryste. And by pra
 yers and confession and other goode
 werkes so that it shal but lytyl gre
 ue. for as sayth saynt Augustyn
 yf a man loue god in suche maner
 that euer he doth is in the loue of
 god or for the loue of god. so he how
 myght that a drope of water that

fallith in a furnyse ful of fyre en
 napeth or groweth so myghty anoy
 eth a venyal synne vnto a man that
 is perspyght in the loue of Ihesu crist
 Men may also refrene venyalle
 synne by the receyving of the pcc
 ous body of Ihesu cryste. by recey
 vng ete of holy water. by almes
 dede. by general confessyon of consp
 teor at masse and at pryne and com
 plune. And by blyssyng of bysshops
 pps and of pcces. And by other
 good werkes.

*De septan peccatis mortalibus.
 Incipit de superbia.*

Now it is behouely thyng
 to tell yn whiche venyalle
 synnes that is to saye cap
 tis of synnes. Alle they comen in to co
 lis but in dpuerte maner. Now be
 the cleped captifs for as moche as
 they be chysed and spryngyng of alle
 other synnes. Of the rote of thys. vii
 synys is pryde the general rote of
 al harmys for of this rote spryngyn
 certeyn braunches. as Ire. envye. ac
 cidye. or slou. h. auarice. or couetyse
 to comyn vnderfondyng. glotonye
 and lecherye. And eueryche of thys
 synnes hath his braunches and hy
 twygges as shalle be declared in her
 chappitres folowyn. and though so
 be that man knowyth not vnterly
 the nombre of the twygges and off
 the harmys that comen of pryde. yet
 wyl I shewe a partye of them as ye

that vnderstande. ther is inobedience
auauntynge. pportyspe despyte. arro-
gancie. Impudence: smellyng of
herte. Insolence. Elacion. pertyna-
ce. Veyn glorie. And other twyggis
that I can not declare. Inobedy-
ent is he that dysobeyeth for despyte
to the commaundment of god and
to his souerayns & to his goffly fa-
der. Auaintour is he that auainteth
hym of the harme or of the bowite þ
he hath don. Iportyspe is he that sy-
deth to shewe hym suche as he is.
And shewed hym to the peple to seme
suche as he is not. Dyspytous is he
that hath disdain of his neyghbour
that is to saye of his euen crysten &
hath dyspyte to doo that hym ought
to do. Arrogant is he that thinketh
that he hath that bounte in hym that
he hath not. or weneith that he sholde
haue it by his deserte. or ellys that he
denieth that he be that he is not. Im-
pudent is he that for his pryde hath
no shame for his synne. Swellyn-
ge of herte is whan a man reioyseth
hym of harme that he hath don. Inso-
lent is he that dyspyseth in his Juge-
ment alle other folke as to the regar
of his walewe and of his conynge &
of his spekyng and of his berynge.
Elate is he whan he may nether suf-
fer to haue mayster ne folowe. Im-
patient is he that wyl not be taught
ne vnderstonde of his vices and by
shyft warrpeth ayenst trouthe weyn-
gly and defendeth his folw. Contu-
macy is he þ through his Indignaci-
on is ayenst eueri auctorite or power

of them that ben his souerayns. Pres-
umption is whan a man taketh
an empryse that hym ought not to
doo. or ellys he may it not doo. And
that is calld surquedry. Inreueren-
ce is whan a man doth not honoure
there as hym ought to doo and wey-
teth to be reuerenced. Pertynary is
whan a man defendeth his folw and
trusteth to mykyl to his owen witte

Veyn glorie is for to haue pompe
and despyte in temporel hygnes and
glorys hym in worldy estates. Tan-
gelyng is whan a man spekyth to
mykyl to fow folke & clappeth as
a mylle and taketh no kepe what
he sayth. And there is yet a pryde spy-
re of pryde that wayteth first to be
salewed or he salewe. all be he lesse
worthy than that other it perauetur
and eke he wayteth to fynde or to go
aboue hym in the wepe or byfthe pay
or be schyld or goo to offryng before
his neyghbour & suche a prude despy-
te to be magnified & honoured be-
fow the peple. Now ben ther two
maners of pryde that one of them is
wythin the herte of a man. And that
other is without. Of whiche forsaide
thinges and moo than I haue sayde
apperteynen to the pryde þ is wythin
the herte of man. And there be also
other spyres of pryde þ be withouten
But neuertheles one of thysse spyres
of pryde is sygne of that other. Right
as the gay leffel of tauerne is sygne
of the wyne that is in the feler. And
this is in many thynges as in speche
in countenance in outrageousnes.

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of any of clothyng. Cryst wolde not
 so fone haue noted & spoken of the
 clothyng of that riche man in the gos-
 pel but yf it had be synne. For as
 sayth saynt Gregore. Pricyous clo-
 thyng is culpable for the derthe of it
 and for his strangenes. for his dys-
 gysynges and for the superfluyte
 for the Inordynate scantnes. And to
 the fyrst synne that is in superfluyte
 of clothyng. whiche that maketh it
 so dere to harm of the peple that ou-
 ly the coste of the embrowdyng. The
 dysgysyng endentynge. or baryng.
 oimdyng. palyng and semblable wi-
 se of clothyng in Vanite. There is al-
 so costlew furrng in gownes. And
 also mylke pouysyng of chesell to
 make hoolys so mylke daggyng
 of shenis wyth the superfluyte in len-
 gthe of the forsaide gownes trayling
 in the dung and in the myre on hors
 and eke on foot as wel of man as
 of woman. that al that treplyng is
 verylly as in effect wasted. consumed
 tredbare and rotten wyth dung ra-
 ther than it is puen to the poure. to
 grete domage of the forsaide poure
 folke and that in sondry wyse. this
 is to sayn the more that cloth is was-
 ted the more must it coste for the scar-
 senes. And furtherouer yf they wol-
 de yue suche pouysyd and daggyd
 clothis to the poure folke. It is not
 conuenient to were for her estate ne
 sufficient to her necessyte. On that o-
 ther syde for to speke of the dishordy-
 nat scantnes of clothyng as ben thys
 cutted stoppis or hāselines þ through

her shortnes couer not the shamefull
 membres of a man to wyrted enten-
 te. Alas sounne of them shewe in the
 shap and the boos of the horryble
 swollen membres that seeme like to
 the maladye of hyema in the wrap-
 pyng of her hosyn and eke the but-
 tokeys of hem behynd that faren
 as is were the hynderparte as a she-
 ape in the ful of the mone. And
 more ouer the wretchyd swelling
 membres that they shewe in dysgy-
 syng in departyng of her hosyn whit
 and rede semeth that half the preuy
 membres weren sleyn. And so by þ
 they departe their hosyn in other co-
 lours as is whyte and black or whyt

And blake or blacke and red
 and so forth. Than semeth it as by
 Barpaunce of calour that half the
 parte of his preuy membres ben cor-
 rupt by the spre of saynt Antouye.
 or by Canker. or by other suche mis-
 chaunces. yet of the hynderparte off
 her buttoke it is wel horryble for to
 see. For artes in that partye of her
 body there as they purgen her sty-
 lyng ordure. that full party shewe
 they proude to the people in despy-
 te of honeste. whiche honeste that
 Ihesu Crist and his frendes obser-
 ued to shewe in his lyp. Now as to
 outrageous aray of woman. god
 woote though the dysage of hem se-
 me ful chasty & debonayr. yet not sp-
 en they in theyr aray of a tyte. ly-
 chorousnes and pryde. I saye pot þ
 honeste in clothyng of man and wo-
 man is vncouenable

But certes the superfluyte or dyfordinat sheweth of clothyng is reprovabyl. Also the spynne of ornament or in apparel as in thynges that apperteyne to rydng. as in many delycat houses that be holden for delyte by cause they be so fapf fat and coslye. And also many vicious kinawe maintained by cause of them. And in curpous harnays as in sadles. robes. peytrells. and brydles couerdyd wth precious clouth and riche barres and plates of golde and syluer. For whiche god sayeth by zaki as the prophete. I wyl conforde the ryders on suche horsis. These folke taken litel regarde of rydng of goddes son. and his harnays when he rood vpon an asse and had none other harnays but the clothis of poure disciples. Ne we rede not that he rode euer on ony other best. I speke thus that of superfluyte. not for the honeste whan reason it requyret. And setteth ouer certtes pryde is gretefy notyfied in holdyng of grete meyne whā they be of spyl prouffyt. And namefy whan the meyne is felonous and domageous to the peple by hardyness of her lordship or by weye of offyce. For certtes suche lordys sellen her lordshippes to the deuyl of helle. whā they susteyne the wyckednes of her meyne. or ellys whan these folke offlowe degre as they that holde hostelryes susteyn thes by their hostelryes that is in many maners of discretes suche maner of folke ben the flyes h

folowen the hony. Or ellys the houses that folowen the careyn whiche forsayd folke strangle spyrituallly her lordship. For whiche dauid sayth wyckednes moot come on the lordshippis. And god gyue that they mo. we descende down in to helle. For in her houses is iniquyte and shewdynes and not god of heuen. And certtes yf thou doo no mendenēt right as god gaf his blyssyng to laban by cause of Iacob and to Pharaο for the scrupre of Ioseph. Right so wyl god geue his malison to suche lordes that susteyne the wyckednes of her seruantes. But the comyn pryde of the table apperteyneth eke ful ofte. For certtes riche men be clpyd to fesyng and poure folke be put away and rebuked. And there is excessse of dyuerse metes and drynkes and namefy off curpous maner of bakymens and of scumblable wast so that it is abusyon for to thynke. And eke in grete puryousnes of vessel and curiosite of mynysstralrye by the whiche a man is styred more to the despytes of luxurye. yf so be that he sette his herte the lesse vpon our lord Ihesu Cryst certteyn it is a synne. And certtes the delycate metys and the delyte myght be soo grete in the caas h men myght the lyghelyst falle on hem in to dedely synne. The spyrte h souden of pryde. Sothly is whan they souden off malysse ymagyned and auysed and forncast or ellys of vsage. ben dedely synnes it is no doubte. and whā they

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souden by frelte vnaupsed sodeyn
 ty. & sodeynly wythdrawe agayn. al
 be they greuous synnes. I gess & sup
 pose they be not dedely. Now myght
 men aye wherof that pryde souldeth
 & spryngeth. And I say þ somtyme
 it spryngeth of goodes of nature. &
 somtyme of the goodes of fortune &
 somtyme of the goodes of grace. certes
 the goodes of nature stoden in the go
 des of body o: of soule. certes the go
 des of the body. be hese of body stretþ
 despuernes. beaute. gentye. & fraun
 chyse. The goodes of nature of the
 soule ben good witte sharpe vnder
 stondyng subtil engyne. virtu na
 turel good memoire. Goodes of for
 tune ben ryches. hygh degres of lord
 shippis & preysynges of the people.
 Goodnes of grace ben science. po
 wer to suffre spirituel trauayse. be
 dygnytes. vertuous contemplation
 wythstondyng of temptation & sem
 blable thynges. Of whiche forsayde
 goodes certes it is a grete folpe a mā
 to pryden hym in ony of them alle:
 Now as for to speke of goodes off
 nature god wote that som tyme we
 haue hem in nature as moche to our
 damage as to our prouffyt. As for
 to speke of hese of body certes it pas
 syth ful lyghtly. And eke it is ful of
 te thenchoson of the sekens of the
 soule for god woot the flesh is a ful
 grete enemye to the soule. And ther
 for the more that a body is hoole. the
 more be we in payl to falle. Eke
 for to pryde hym in his strengthe off
 body it is a grete folpe. For certes

the flesh conceyeth ayenst the spryte.
 And euer the more ströger the fleshe
 is. the foryer may the soule be. And
 ouer al this strengthe of the body &
 worldly hardynes causeth ful ofte
 many men to peryll and mynchaur
 re. Eke for to pryde hym of his gen
 trye. it is ful grete folpe. For ofte tyme
 the gentye of the body begyn
 neth of the gentye of the soule. And
 eke we be alle of one fader and of
 one moder. And al we ben of one na
 ture rotye and corrupt both riche &
 poure. For soth a maner gentye is
 for to pryde þ appateylleth mannes
 corage wyth vertues o: moralptees
 and makyth hym a crysten chyld.
 For trusteth wel that what mā that
 synne ouer maystryde is very choall
 to synne. Now ben there thre gene
 ral thynges of gentylnes as esche
 wyng of vyces o: rybaudrye. And
 scruage of synne in worde & werke
 in contenaiice & vsping vertu as cur
 tesye clenness & to be lybetrall that
 is to saye large by mesure. For that
 that passyth mesure is folpe and syn
 ne Another is that he remembre hym
 of the bowite that he of other folke
 hath receyuyd. Another is to bening
 ne ouer his subgette. wherfore as
 sayth Senekke. There is nothyng
 more counable to man of hygh es
 tate than debonaryte. & these flesh þ
 men clepen bees. whan they make
 her kyng. they chesyn one that hath
 non prycke wherwyth he may syn
 ge. Another is a man to haue a no
 ble herte and a dyspygent tatteryn to

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hpe Vertuous thynges. Certes also who that prydeth in the goodes off fortune he is ful lyke a greet sole. For somtyme a man is a full grete man by the morowe that is a wretche or a captif or it be nyght. a somtyme despytes oe man ben cause of greuous maladye thorough whiche he deperth Certes the commendacyon of the peple is somtyme ful fals a full biotyl for to trust This day they pypse. to morowe they blame. god woot Eke desyre to haue commendacion of the peple hath causyth deth to many a man. Now certes a man to pryde hym in the goodes of grace is eke an outrageous folpe for the yestes of grace that shold haue tourned hym to goodnes a to medecyne tourment to benygn and to confusyon. as sayth saynt gregore. Now syth that so is that ye haue vnderstonde what is pryde and whiche be the spyres of it And how mennys pryde sourdeth and spryngyth Now shal ye vnderstonde which is the remedye against pryde. And that is humylyte or mekenes That is a vertu thurgh which man hath very knowleche of hym self and holdeth of hym self no deyn te ne no pryce as in regarde of his desettes consyderyng euer his freethe. Now ben there thre maners of humylyte. as humylyte in herte. and another in the mouth. And the thyrde in werkyngs. The humylyte in herte is in foure maners that is whan a man holdeth hym self as nought worth

byfore god of heuen. Another is whan he despyseth non other man.

The thirde is. that he reekyth not though men holden hym nought The fourth is whan he is not sorow of his humylyacion. Also the humylyacion of mouth is in four thynges In attēperat speche whā he knoweth with his owen mouth he is suche as he thynke th he is in his herte. Another whan he ptepseth the debonayrte of another man And also nothing therof amenusith. Humylyte eke in werkyngs is in four maners The first is whan he put men before hym. The second is to chese the lowest place. The thyrde is gladly to assente to good counceyl. The fourth is gladly to stonde in obedyence of his seuerayn or of hym that is hygher in degree. Certes that is a grete werke off humylyte.

Sequitur de Inuidia

After pryde wyl I speke off
a the foule synne of enuye.

Whiche that is as by the worde of the phyllosophre sorowe off other mennys prouyspt. And after the worde of saynt Augustyn it is sorowe of other mennys wele and Joye of other mennys harm. This foule synne is platly ayenst the holy ghoost. Al be it so that euery synne is ayenst the holy ghoost. yet for as moche as bounte appetteneth to the holy ghoostie properly. And enuye cometh properly of malysce Therefore it is properly ayenst the

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Bounte of the hooly ghoost.

Now hath malice two spyces that is to saye hardynes of herte and wyckednes. or elles the flesche of man is so blynde þ he cōsidereth not þ he is in synne. whiche is the hardynes off the deupl. That other spyce of enuie is whan a man warrpeth apenst trouthe whan that he woote that it is trouthe. And also whan he warrpeth the grace that god hath geue to hya neyghbour. And al this is enuie Certes than is enuie the werst synne that is. for sothly al other synnes he somtyme apenst one spicial vertue but certes enuie is apenst all maner vertues and al goodnes for it is sorp of al bounte of his neyghbours.

And in this maner it is diuerse from al synnes for vnnethe is there ony synne that it ne hath somme despyte in hym sawonly enuie that euert hath in hym self angursshe and sorowe.

The spyces of enuie ben thysse There is first sorowe of other mens goodnes. And of her prosperite ought to be kindly mater off ioye Thene is enuie a synne apenst kinde The seconde spyce of enuie is Ioye of other mens harme.

Of this seconde spyce cometh backbiting or detraction that hath two spyces as thus Som men prysse her neyghbour by wycked entente. for he maketh alway a wycked knotte at the last ende alway he maketh a but that is signe of more blame thā woth is al the prysing. The second spyce is that a man be good and do and saye a thyng to good entente.

The backbiter wyl torne al the goodnes by soo down to his shrewde entente. The thurd is to amenege the bounte of his neyghbour. The fourthe spyce of backbiting is this that if men speke godnes of a man the backbiter wyl saye. perseye yet is such a man better than he in dyspreysing of hym that men prayse. The fyfthe is to consente gladly to her line the harme that men speken of other folke. This synne is ful grete and by encreaseth after the wycked entente of the backbiter. After backbiting cometh grutching or murmurance And somtyme it spryngeth of Impacience apenst god and somtyme apenst man. Apenst god is whan a mā grutcheth agaynst the payne of helle or apenst pouerte or losse of catel or apenst rayn or tempest. or elles grutcheth that shrewdes haue prosperite. or elles that gode men haue aduersite.

And alle thysse thynges shold men suffre paciently. For they comen by the rightful Iugement and ordynance of god Somme tyme cometh grutching of auarice as Judas grutchyd apenst Magdalene whan she anonutted the hede of our lord Ihesu Crist wth her precyous oynement This maner of mutmur is such as whan men grutchen of goodnes. off that men hem self doon. or that other folke doon of her owen catel:

Somtyme cometh mutmur of pryde as whan Symon the Pharysee grutchyd apenst Magdalene whan she approchyd to Ihesu Crist.

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And wept at hys feet for her synnes

And somtyme it sourdeth of enuye
whan men dysconforten a man
hys hatyn that was pryncie or beryth
hym on honde thyng that is fals.

Murmur is eke ofte amonge ser-
uauntes whan her souerayns byd-
den hem doo serful thynges.

And for as moche as they dar not o-
penly wythsaye the commaundement
of her mayster. yet wyl they saye hat-
me and grutch and murmur pry-
uely for very despyte. whiche wor-
des men clepe the deuyls Patir no-
ster. Though so be the deuyll had ne-
uer Patir noster.

But that folke yeeuche suche a name.
sometyme it comyth of Ire or of pry-
ue hate that noryssheth rancoure in
herte as after I shal declare.

Thenne cometh eke bytternes of her-
te through whiche bytternesse euery
good dide of hys neyghbour semeth
to hym bytter and vnsauoure.

Than comyth dyscorde that vnsu-
beth alle maner of frenshyp.

Thenne comyth scomynge of hys
neyghbour al doo he neuer so well.
thenne comyth accusynge as whan
men seken occasyon to annoyne hys
neyghbour. whiche that is lyke the
craft of the deuyll that wayth bothe
nyght and daye to accusen vs alle.

Thenne cometh malygnyte
through whiche a man noyeth hys
neyghbour pryncely if he may.

And yf he nought may algate his
wycked wyl shal not wane as for
to brene his hous pryncely or en-

paynen hym or slec hys beestys and
semblable thynges.

Now wyl I speke of the reue-
nye of this foule synne of enuye.

And the first is the loue off god
pryncypally and lounge of hym
self and of hys neyghbour.

For sothly that one may not be with-
out that other. And cryst wyl in
the name of thy neyghbour þ thou
shalt vnderstonde thy broder. For
certes al we haue one fader flesshly
and one moder that is to saye Adam
and Eue. And eke one fader spi-
rituel. that is to saye god of heuen.

Thy neyghbour art thou holde
for to loue and wyl hym alle good-
nes. And therefore sayth god. loue thy
neyghbour as thy self that is to say
to lyf and to soule and saluation.

And more oner thou shalt loue hym
in worde and benygne chere and
monysshyp and chastysynge in a
doye to comforte hym and praye for
hym wyth alle thy herte. And in dede
thou shalt loue hym in suche wyse þ
thou shalt do to hym in charyte as
thou woldest were don to thy owne
persone. And therefore thou shalt doo
to hym no damage in wycked wo-
de ne harme in his body ne in his ca-
tel ne in his soule by entysynge of wy-
cked ensample. Thou shalt not des-
pyse his wyf ne none of his thynges.
Vnderstonde eke that in the name of
thy neyghbour is comprehendyd his
enmye. certes a mā shal loue his en-
mye for the comaundement of god.
a sothly thy frende shal thou loue i god

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I saye the enemye shalle thou loue
for goddys sake by his commaun-
dement. For it were reson a man
shold hate his enemye. For soth god
wyl not receyue vs to his loue that
ben his enemyes. Apenst thre maner
wronges that his enemye doth to him
he shal doo thre thynges as thus. a-
penst hate and rancoure of herte he
shal loue hym in herte. apenst chy-
dyng and wy. Red wordes he shall
praye for his enemye. Apenst the wic-
ked dede of his enemye he shall doo
hym bowite. For cryste sayth loueth
your enemyes & prayeth for hem þ
spelyth you harme & eke for them þ
pou chasch and pursuyn dooboun-
te to hem that you haten.

Lo thus commaunded vs our lord
Jhesu Cryste to do to oure enemyes
for soth nature dryueth vs to loue ou-
re frendes. And persey oure enemyes
haue more nede to loue than our fren-
des And they that more nede haue
Certes to hem shal we doo goodnes.
and certes in that dede haue remem-
braunce of the loue of Jhesu Cryste
that deyde for his enemyes. And for
as moche as that loue is the more gre-
uous to perfourme. so moche is mo-
re grette the mercyte. And therefore the
sounyng of our enemye hath confor-
med the benygn of the deuyl. For
ryght as the deuyl is confyted by hu-
milyte. Right so is he wounded to
the deeth by the loue of our enemye.
Certes than is loue medycine that
chaseth out the benygn of enuye fro
manys herte.

Sequitur de Ira

After enuye wyl I decla-
re of the synne of Ire.
For soth he that hath
enuye vpon his neygh-
bour.

Anon compulsy wyl synde hym
mater of wrath in worde or in dede.
Apenst hym to whom he hath enuye
for sothly he that is proud or eny-
ous is spghely wroth. This synne of
Ire after dyscrypyng of saynt Au-
gustyn is wycked wyl to be auen-
gyd by worde or by dede.

Ire after the Philosophye is the fer-
uent bloode of man y quykyn in
his herte. thurgh whiche he wyl hat-
me to hym that he hateth.

For certes the herte of a man by en-
chasyng and meuryng of his bloode
weyeth so troubled that he is out of al
Jugement of resons. But ye
shul vnderstonde that Ire is in two
maners. Don of them is goode and
that other is wycked.

The good Ire is by Ielousye of god-
nes thurgh the whiche a man is wro-
the with wyckednes and agayn wic-
kednes.

And therefore sayth the
wyse man that yre is better then pla-
ye. this Ire is wyth deboneyte and
it is wrath wythout bytternes not
wroth agaynst the man. but wroth
with the mysdede of the mā as saith
the pphete. Irascimini et nolite pec-
care. Now vnderstode þ wycked yre
is in two maners þ is to say sodeyn
yre or hasty yre wythout auysement

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and consentynge of hys reson. The meynynge and the sense of this is that reson of a man ne consentith not to that sodeyn pre. And than it is veyn at another pre is that is ful wycked that cometh of felonye of herte auyfed & cast byfore wyth wycked wyl to doo vengeance. & therto his reson consentyth & sothly this is dedely synne. This pre is so displeysant to god that it troublith his hous and chausth the holy goost out of manns soule and put in hym the sekene of the deuyl and benymeth the man fro god that is his ryghtful lord This pre is a ful grete plesaunce to the deuyl for it is the deuylles furney that he enchauntyth with the fyre of helle. For certis as fyre is more myghty to dystrope erthly thynges than a nother element. Right so ire is myghty to dystrope alle spiritualle thynges. Loke how that fyre of smale gledes þe almoost dede vylde assen wyl quyknen agen whan they be touchid with brymstone. right so pre wol enurmore quyknen agen whan it is to chyd with pryde þe is couerdy in manns herte. For certis pryde may nat come out of no thyng but if it were first in the same thing naturallly. as fyre is drawyn out of flyntes with steel. right so is pryde a mater of pre. right as rancour is norisshet & kept therof There is a maner tree as sayth saynt Isodore. That whan men make fire of that tre and couer the colys of hit wyth assen. Sothly

the fyre therof wol laste al a yere or more. And ryght so farith it by rancour. whan he is ones conceyued in the hertes of somme men. Lettes it wyl laste perauenture from one efter day to on other or more. But certis þe man is ful fetre from the mercy of god al that whyle. In this forsapde deuyls folneys they forgen thre shrewys. Pryde than bloweth and encrepeth the fyre by chydynge & wycked wordes. Thanne stondesth enure and holdeth the pryn upon the hertes of men. wyth a prayer of long tonges wyth longhe rancour. And thenne stont the synne of contynuell styf and cheest and berith and forgyth the vylayns reproynge. Lettes this cursyd synne anoyeth both the man hym self and eke his neghbour. For sothly almost al the harm that one man doth to his neghbour cometh of wrath. For certis outrageous wrath doth al that cuer the deuyl commaundeth hym for he spareth nether for Crist ne for his swete moder in his outrageous anger and pre but speketh and sklaundryth his neghbour. this is a cursyd lye whiche lye shold be de bonayt & spyrytuell that shold kepe his soule. Certis this pre or wrath bynymeth eke godys due lordshyp & that is manns soule & the loue of his neghbours. it styryth alway eke aynst trouth it reueth hym the quyte of his herte and subuertith his soule. Ofpre comen thysse styngyng engendures. first hate þe olde wrath renewyd

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though which a man forsaketh his own friend that he hath loved so long & theme cometh wether & every manner of wrong & a man doth to his neyghbour in body or in gatel.

Of this cursyd synne of Tre cometh eke manslaughter. And Underston deth wel & manslaughter is in dyuer se wyse. Somme maner of manslaughter is spiritual. And som bodely Spyrutuel manslaughter is in vi. thynges. first by hate as sayth saint John he that hateth his broder is an homycyde. Manslaughter is eke by bacbtyng of which bacbtyour saith salamon that they haue two swerdys wpth which they sle her neyghbours. for sothly as wpreked it is to benym his good name as his lyff. homycyde is eke in penyng of wpreked counceyl by fraude. or for to penyue counceyl for to atrepe wraungfull customes and talagys of which spekieth Salamon. Upon rotynge and bere hungry ben lyend to cruel loyges In wythholdyng or abredgyng of the hyres wagys of poure folke for which the wyse man sayth fede pe hym that almost dyeth for hungry. for sothly but yf thou fede hym thou sleest hym. And al thys ben dedely synnes. Bodely manslaughter is whan thou sleest hym wpth thy tunge. Another maner is whan thou commaundest to sle a man or ellys pteuest hym counceyl to sle a man Manslaughter in dede is in four maners. That one is by lawe. ryght as

a Justice damped hym that is culpable to the deth. But lere the Justice be. waat that he do it rightfully and & he doo it not for deyte to spule blood but for keepyng of rightwysnes. Another homycyde is don for necessite as whan a ma sleeth another his defendaunt and that he ne may other wyse ascape fro his own deth. But certeyn and he may escape wpthout slaughter of his aduersarye & sleeth hym he doth synne. And he shal bere penaunce as for dedely synne. Eke yf a man by caas or aventure shete an arrowe or cast a stoon wpth which he sleeth a man it is homycyde.

Eke yf a woman by necessity ouerlyeth her chyld in slepyng It is homycyde and dedely synne. Eke whan a man destroyeth conception of a chyld or makyth a woman barren by drynkes of benymous herbes though which she may not conceyue. Or sleeth her chyld by drynkes. or ellys putteth certeyn materys althynge in her secrete place to sle her chyld. Or ellys doth vnkynde synne by which man or woman shedyth his nature in place there as a chyld may not be conceived. Or ellys yf a woman haue conceived & hurte herself & sleeth her chyld. yet is it homycyde what sape we eke of women & murder her chyldren for drede of wordely shame. Lertes it is eke an honourble homycyde. Eke yf a man apioche to a woman by deyte of lecherie through which the chyld is perysshed ellys synneth a

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woman weepingly by which her chil
 de is slayn alle thysc ben homycides
 and dedely horribly spynnes. yet co
 myn of pre many moo spynnes as in
 worde in thought in dede as wel as
 he that acciteth vpon god or blasphem
 myth god of whiche he is hym self
 gytyl or dyspytheth god and alle his
 halowes as don thysc cursyd housour
 dours in dyuerse contreres. This cur
 syd spune do they whan they seplen
 in her herte ful wylkedy of god &
 hys halowes Also whan they trecten
 inworthely the sacrament of the a
 wter Thyske spune is so grete. that
 inmethe may it be recled but h the
 metry of god passyth his werkys
 whiche metry is grete and benygne.
 There cometh also of pre a tery an
 ger whan a man is sharply amones
 shed in his strift to forlete hys spure
 Than wyl he be angry and anywe
 re oketly & angertly to defende or
 cuseyn his spune. by vnstedfastnes of
 his flessh. or ellys he dyd it for to hol
 de company wyth his felawes. or el
 lis he sayth. the fende entyfed hym or
 ellys he dyd it for his yowth or ellys
 his complexyon is so coragrous h
 he may not forbere. ellys it is desty
 ne as he sayth vnto a certeyn age. or
 ellys he sayth it comyth hym of gyn
 tylnes of his auctrypes & semblable
 thynge Al thysc maner of folke so
 wrappyn them in h. x. spynnes h they
 wyl not despyer hem self. For sothly
 no wyght that excusyth hym wilful
 ly of his spune. may be despyerd off
 his spune tyl he mekely be kno with

his spune After therne cometh swe
 ryng that is cypres apenst the com
 maundment of god & this be falsyth
 of anger & of pre. God saith thou
 shalt not take the name of thy lorde
 in vdyll Also our lord Ihu cryst saith
 by the worde of saynt mathew. ne
 wyl ye to swere in al maner. neyther
 by heuen for it is goddys trone ney
 ther by erthe for it is the benche off
 his feet. ne by iherusalem for it is the
 crite of a grete kyngde. ne by thyng he
 de. for thou ne mayst make an hert
 whyte ne black. but pour othe shal
 be. ye. ye. nay. nay. And what that is
 more cyp. thus sayth cryst. For cris
 tes sake swere ye not so synfully in
 dysmembryng of Cryst. by soule. her
 te. bones. and body. For ye thynke h
 the cursyd Jewes dysmembryd hym
 not ynough but ye dysmembere hym
 more And ys so be that lawe compel
 le you to swere thenne truse you af
 ter the lawe of god in your sweryng
 As sayth saynt Iherome the fourth
 chappitre. Thou shalt kepe
 thre condicions. Thou shalt swe
 re in trouth. in dome & in rightwys
 nes. This is to saye thou shalt
 swere soth. for euery lesyng is apenst
 Cryste. For Cryste is very trouth.
 And thynke wel this that euery grete
 swerret not compellyd laussfully to
 swere. the plaghe of benegaunce shal
 le not parte from hys hows whyles
 he dysyth suche vnlawful swerynge.
 Thou shalt eke swere in dome when
 tho art compellyd by the domes ma to

without the trowthe. Eke thou shalt
not sweare for curse. for sauour. for
mede but for rightwysnes for decla-
ryng of trowth to the worship of god
& to helppng of thyn eyn crysten. &
therfor every man that takyth god-
dis name in ydle or falsly swereth
wyth his mouth. or ellys taketh on
hym the name of cryst to be callyd a
crysten man and lyueth agens cryst-
ten lyuynge & his techynge. Al they ta-
ke goddis name in ydle. Lo ke eke
what saith saint peter actioun quar-
to. there is none other name vnder
heuen geuen to man in whiche they
moot be sauyd. That is to saye but
in the name of Ihu cryst. Take ke-
pe eke how that precious name off
Ihu cryst as sayth saynt Poule at
philypenses In nomine Ihu etc.
That in the name of Ihu every kynde
of heuenly creature or erthly or of
helle shold tremble. for it is so high &
so worshypful that the cursyd fende
in helle shold tremble for to here hit
named than seined it that men þ swer-
re so howyblly his blessyd name that
they despyse it more boldly than dyd
the cursyd Jewes þ tremeleden whan
they herde his name. Now cetes syth
þ swerynge but it be doo al lawfully
is so hooly defenden moche worse is
for to swere falsly & eke nedeles.
What saye we eke of them that del-
ten them in swerynge and holde it a
gentylte or manly dede to swere gre-
te othes. and what of them that of
very vsage necessity not to swere gre-
te othes and al the cause not worthe

a strawe. Certes this is howyble syn-
ne. Swerynge also without anye-
ment is eke synne. But late vs go
now to that cursyd and howyble swe-
ryng of adunacion and countenoun-
as don thys fals enchaunours and
nygromancers in basyns ful of wa-
ter. Or in a bryght swerde. In a cir-
cle or in a spere. or in a sholdre boon
of a sheep I can not saye but they do
cursydly & dampnably agens criste
and alle the feith of holy church.
What saye by them that helpeyn in
dynn naylis as by sleight or by noyse
of byrdes and of bestys or by sorte.
by nygromancye. by drames. By
charyng of doirys by gnawynge of
ratys or crackynge of howys and
suche maner of wretchydnes. Certes
al this thynge is defended of god and
eke holy church. for whiche they be
cursyd tyl they come to amendement.
þ on suche fylthe sette their beleue.
Charms for woundes & maladies
of men or of bestys. yf they take any
effect. it may perauenture þ god sus-
freteth it. for men shold gyue the more
feyth & reuerence to his name. Now
wyl I speke of lesynges whiche ge-
nerally is fals significacioun of word
wyth entent to discreue his eyn crys-
ten. Som lesyng there is of whiche
cometh non auantage to no wyght.
And som lesyng cometh to the ese &
prouysyt of a man & to domage of a
nother man. Another lesyng for to
saue his lyp or catel. Another lesyng
comyth of delpte. They wyl
forge a longe tale and pepnte it with

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al circumstaunces wherof al the groun-
de is fals. Somme lesyng comyth
for he wyl susteyne his worde. And
somme lesyng comyth of techelises
wpythouten awysenment and sembla-
ble thynges. Lete vs now touche
the vyce of flaterye. whiche comyth
not gladly but for drede or for coue-
tyse. flaterye is generally wrang-
ful preyng. flaterers ben the deuy-
ls noryses that norysseth his chyl-
dren wpyth the myste of losengery.
for soth sayth salamon that flaterye
is worse than detraction. for somtyme
detraction makyth an haunter
man be the more humble for he dre-
deth detraction. But certeyn flaterye
maketh a man to enhaunce his herte
and his countenaunce. flaterers ben
the deuylls enchauntours for they
maken a man to wene hym self be
lyke that he is not lyke. They be lyke
Judas that betrayed god. And thys
flaterers betraye a man to selle hym
to this enemye that is the deuyll. flate-
ters ben the deuylls chappelynes
that syngen euer placebo. I reken
flaterye in vyces of Ire. for ofte tyme
yf a man be wroth with another
thene wyl we flaterre somme wy-
ght to susteyne hym in his quarrelle.

Speke we now of suche cursing
as comyth out of prous hertes. Ma-
lyson may be sayd generally euer
maner power of harm. suche cur-
syng betwixt a man the regne of god.
As sayth saynt Poule. And of suche
cursyng wrongfully retorneth aye
to hym that cursyth. As a byrde

retorneth agayn to his owne neste.
And ouer alle thyng men cught les-
sewe to curse her chylde and to pe-
ue to the deuyll her engendrure as fer
forth as in hym is. Certes it is a
grete peryl and a grete synne. Lete
vs then speke of chydnyng and repre-
uyng whiche ben grete woundes in
mannys herte. for certes vnnethe
may a man be playnly accorded with
hym that he hath openly truelyd. re-
prouyd and dysclaundred this is a
ful grisly synne. As Cryste sayth in
the gospel. And take ye kepe now
that he þe reprouyth his neyghboure
by some harme or by somme peyn þe
he hath in his body. as mesyl. croked
harlote: or by somme spgne tha he
doth. Now yf he repreuyth hym
by harm of peyne. thene retorneth
the repref to Ihesu Cryste. for peyn
is sent by the right wys sonde of god
and by his sufferance. be it meschance
or mayne or maladye.

And yf he repreue hym vnnacharyta-
bly of synne. thou holout. thou dron-
kelewe harlot and soo forth thene
apperteyned it to reioysyng of the de-
uyll that euer hath ioye that men don
synne. And certes chydnyng may not
come but of dyscynous herte. for
after haboundaunce of the herte spe-
keth the mouth ful ofte. And ye shal
vnderstonde whan ony man chasty-
seth another þe he betwar fro chydnyng
or repreuyng. for trewly but he be-
waar he may ful lightly quench
the fyre of angre and of wrath whi-
che that he shal not quench.

And peraventure sleeth hym that he
myght chastyse wpyth benygnyte.

For as sayth Salamon. The a-
mpable tongue is the tre of lyf. that
is to save of lyf spiritual. And a dis-
laue tongue sleeth the spirites of hym
that is receyved. Lo what sayth

saint Austyn There is no thing like
the deuylls chylde as he that oft chp-
beth. Saynt Poule sayth eke. I ser-
uaunt of god behoue not to chpde.

And who that chpdyng is a spleina
thyng betwpyt alle maner folk.

yet yet is it artes most vncouenable
betwpyt a man and his wyf. for
there is neuer reste And tharfor sayth

Salamon. An hous that is vncou-
ryd in rayn and dropppyng. and a
chpdyng wyf be lyke a man that is
in a dropppyng hous in many places
thought he eschewe the dropppyng in
one place. it dropppyth on hym in a
nother place. So sayth it by a

chpdyng wyf but she chpde hym in
one place she wyl chpde hym in ano-
ther place. And therfore better is a
moral breed wpyth ioye. than a hous
ful of deuytes wpyth chpdyng. Lo

what Salamon and saynt Poule
sayn. Oye women be ye sub-
gettye to your husbandys as beho-

ueth in god. And ye men loue your
wyfys. Afterward we speke off

scowpyng whiche is a wpyked syn-
ne and namely whan he scoweth a
man by hys goode werkys. for
artes suche scowes faren lyke the
foule tode that may not endure to

smelle the swete sauour of the wyne
whan it flouressyth. These scowes
ben partynge felowes wpyth the deuyll
for they haue ioye whan the deuyll
wynneth and sorow whan he leysyth
They ben aduersaries to Ihesu crys-
te. for they hate that he soueth that
is to save sauacion of soule. Speke
we now of the wpyked counceyl:

For he that wpyked counceylle pe-
ueth is a treytour. For he dyscey-

ueth hym that trusteth in hym. But
neuertheles yet is wpyked counceyl
apenst hym self. For as sayth the

wyse man. Every false spyng hath
his proprete in hym self. For he

that wyl anoye another man. wyl
peth first hym self. And men shal vn-

derstonde that a man shal not take
his counceyl of false folke ne of an-
gry folk or greuous folk ne of folk

bloun speryally her owen proupte-
ne to moche worldly folk a name-
ly in counceyllyng of foalia.

Now comyth the synne of them that
maken discorde among folk. whi-
che is a synne that Crist hateth. Be-

terly. And no wonder is. for he deyd
for to make conorde. And more

shame don they to cryst thā dpyd they
that hym crucifyed. for god soueth
better that frenshyp be among folk

than he dpyd his owen body. whiche
he gaf for vnyte. Therfore be they ly-

keuyd to the deuyll that cur is abou-
te to make dyscorde. Now comyth
the synne of double tongue for suche
as speke saye before men and wpy-

semblant as though they speken of good entencion. or ellys in game & pleye. And they speken of wycked entente. Now comyth the wreyppnge of counceyl. through whiche man is defamed. Buttherys may he restore the damage. Now comyth manace that is an open folye. for he that openly manaceth he thretteneth more thenne he may overcome ful ofte tyme.

Now comen ydle wordes þe wyth out prouffyt of hym that speaketh the wordes and eke of hym that herke nyth the wordes. Of ellys ydle wordes ben tho that ben needeles or wyth oute entente of naturall prouffyt.

And al be it that ydle wordes be som tyme verayal spure. yet shalle men doubte hem. for we shal yene reke nyng of hem before god. Now comyth Iangelnyng that may not com wyth out synne as sayth

Salomon It is a spure of appert folye

And therefore a phylosophre sayde when a man ayed hym how men shold plesse And he answered do many good werkys & speke fewe Iangelnynges. After this cometh the synne of Iapers that ben the deuceylls appes. for they make folke to longe at her Iaperye as folke don at gwa des of an ape. Suche Iapers defendeth saynt Poule. Loke how that Vertuous wordes and holy comforten hem that traueyllen in the scrup le of Cryst. Ryght so comforten the Byssops wordes and the Enachys of Iapers hem that traueyllen in the scrupre of the deuyll. All thysse ben the

synnes of the tonge that comyn off pre & of other synnes. The remedye ayens pre is a Vertu that cleped is mansuetude that is deboneprie. and eke another Vertu that men clepes patience. saynt Iherome sayth thus of debonaprie that it doth harme to no wyght ne sayth none harm that men hym doo ne supn ne chaungeth not ayens reson. This Vertu cometh somtyme of nature. for as sayth the phylosophre a man is a quyet thyng by nature debonayr and treta ble by goodnes. But when debona prie is enformed of grace hit is the more worthy. Patience is another remedye ayens pre and is a Vertu þe men suffer swetly euery mannes god nes. and is not worth for none harm that is don to hym. The phylosophre sayth that patience is that Vertu that suffereth debonaprie al the outrage of aduersyte. and euery wycked worde. This Vertu maketh a man lyke to god & makyth hym his owen dere chyld. As sayth cryst this Vertu dyscomfyeth thyn enemye.

And therefore saith the wyse man yf thou wolt beynquyssh the thyn enemye see that thou be patient. Suffraunce is another Vertu ayens Ire. And þe is when he suffereth swetly alle anoy aunce & the wronges that men do a man outward. Thou shalt vnder stonde that a man suffereth four maner of grauance in outward thynges. Against which four he must haue foure maner of patience. the first grauance is wycked wordes. þe grauance suffrid

The Perious Tale

Jhesu cryst wpythout grutchyng wel
parcenyly whan the Jewes despyred
hym a reprovyd hym ful ofte. Suf-
fre thou therfore paciently. For the
wyse mā saith yf thou stryue with a
fool if the sole be wroth or though he
laugh. Al gat thou shalt haue no rest
bother greuance outward is to haue
domage of thy catel. There a peny
suffred cryst ful paciently whan he de-
spoyled was of al þe cūer he had in
this lyf and that nas but clothes.

The thirde greuance is to a man to
haue greuance in his body That
suffred cryst ful paciently in alle his
passyon. The fourthe greuance is in
outrageous labour in werke is wher
fore I say that folk that maken her
seruauntes to traueylle to greuously
out of tyme as in holy dayes. Both
ly they doo grete synne. Here a peny
suffred Cryst ful paciently a taught
vs patience whan he bare vpon his
blessyd sholdres the crosse vpon whi-
che he shold suffre despytous deeth. He-
re may men lerne to be pacient. For
certes not only crysten men be paci-
ent for the loue of Jhesu Cryst a for
guedon of the blisse of heuen and of
the blessyd lyf that is perdurable.

But certes the olde paynens that ne-
uer were crystenyd comendyd and
bpyd the vertu of patience. A phyllo-
sophe vpon a tyme that wold haue
beten his disciple for his grete tres-
passe. For whiche he was grete a-
meryd and brought a yerde to scour-
ge the chyld And whan the chyld:

sawde the yerde he sayd to his mayst-
er what wyl ye do I wyl bet the qd the
master for thy correctiō for soth quod
the chyld ye ought fyrst correcte your
self that hath lost your patience for
the gylt of a chyld. For soth said the
mayster al wepyng thou seyst soth
haue thou the yerde my dere sone a
correct me for myn vnpacience. Off
patience comyth obedyence thurgh
whiche a man is obedynt to cryst a
to alle them to whiche he ought too
be obedynt to cryst. And Rynderson
de wel þ obedyence is payfyll whā
men doo gladly and haardly wpyth
good herte entely al that he sholde
doo obedyence generally is to per-
fourme the doctryne of god and to
his souerayn to whiche hym ought
to be obeyssaunt in al rightwysnes.

Sequitur de Acriidia

After the synne of wrath I
a wyl speke of the synne off
acridye or slouth. For en-
uye blyndeth the herte of man. And
Ire troubleth a mā And acridye ma-
keth hym heuy thoughtful and wra-
we. Enuye a ire maken bitternes in
herte. Whiche bitternes is moder off
acridye and benymet him the loue of
alle goodnes. thenne is accide the an-
gre of a trouble herte. And Saynt
Austyn sayth It is anoye of good-
nes and annoye of harme.

Certes this is a dampnable synne
For it doth wronge to Jhesu Cryst
te in as moche as he benymeth the

scrupce that men ought to do to Ihesu Cryste wpyth al dyligence.

As sayth Salamon. But accidye doth none suche dyligence. He doth alle wpyth aniope & weaumes slaknes. excusacion dulnesse and Inlust

for whiche the booke sayth accursyd be he that doth the scrupce of god nedygently. thenne is accidye cunpe to euery estate of man for the estate of man is in thre maners. Epyther it is estate of Innocence as was the state of Adam before or that he syl in synne in whiche estate he was holde to worche as in heeryng and adoueryng of god. Another estate is

estate of superfluyte. In whiche estate men beholden to saloure in prayeng to god for amendement of her synnes.

Another estate is in the estate of grace. In whiche estate is he holden to doo werkyss of penytence And certes to alle thysse thynges is accidye enemye and contrary for he slouth no besynes at alle.

Now certes this foule synne of accyde is eke a ful grete enemye to the spue & lod of the body. for it hath no purueaunce apenst temporel necessitye. for it is slouthyd and forsluggyd and destroyeth alle goodes temporell by rechelesnes. the fourth thyng is that accyde is lyke hem that ben in the peyn of helle by cause of slouth and of her heynnes. for they that be dampned be so bounde that nether may they doo wel ne thynke wel.

Of accyde cometh first that a man

is anoyed and encombyd to do ony goodnes and maketh that god hath abhomyacion of suche accyde as sayth saynt Iohan. Now comyth slouth that wyl suffre no hardnes ne no penaunce for soth slouth is so delicate and so tendre as sayth salamon that he wyl suffre non hardnes ne penaunce and therfore he shendeth al þe he doth. Apenst this rotten horpd synne of accyde or slouth sholde men exortys hem to do good werkyss & manly and byrtuoussly catchen corage wel to doo.

Thynkyng that our lord Ihesu Cryste quyteth euery good dede be it neuer so lytyl vsage of it is a grete thyng. for it maketh as sayth Saynt Bernard the laborer to haue strong armys and harde synewys. And slouth maketh hem feble and tendre.

Than comyth drede for to begynne to wer ony good werkyss. for certes he that is enclined to synne hym thynketh it is to grete an empyse for to vndertake to doo werkyss of goodnes as sayth Saynt Gregore.

Now comyth wanhope that is dyspayr of the mercy of god that cometh somtyme of to mykyl outrageous sorowe and somtyme of mykyl drede ymagynyng that he hath doo so moche that it wolde not auaylle him though he wold repente hym and do goode. Through whiche dyspat or drede. he aboundeth his herte to euery maner synne. As sayth Saynt Augustyn. whiche þ is dampnable

The Peisons Tale

ys it contynue to his ende. it is cleped
slymyng in the holy ghoost.

This horryble synne is so perryous
that he that is dyspeyred that there is
no felonye ne no synne that he doubt
teth for to doo as shewed wel by Ju-
das.

Certes thenne abowen alle
is this synne most dyspleysant and
most aduersary to Cryst. Certes he
that dyspeyret is lyke the coward
champon recreant and needles dis-
peyret. for certes the metey of god
is euer redy to the penitent. But is
about al his werkes. Alas can not
a man bethynke hym on the gospel
of saynt Luke. Luke xij. where as
Cryst sayth that as wel shalfe there
be more Joye in heuyn vpon a syn-
ful man that doth penitence than v-
pon nyenty and ix. ryghtfull men
haden no penitence. Loke fether in
the gospel the Joye and the festis off
the good man that had lost his sone
whan his sone wpth repentance was
retorned to his fader. Can they not
remembre eke as sayth saynt Luke
xviii. how that the theef that was
hanged besyde Ihesu. Sayde lord re-
membere on me whan thou comest
to thy regne for soth said Cryst. this
day shalt thou be wpth me in para-
dys. Certes there is none soo horryble
synne of man that it ne may in hys
lyf be destroyed by penitence thurgh
vertu of the passyon of Cryste.

Alas what nedeth man thenne to be
dyspeyred sythen his metey is so re-
dy. giffe and haue. Thanne co-

meth sompnolence that is slugg
slymbryng whiche makyth a man
to be heuy and dull in body and in so-
ule And this synne cometh of slouth
And certes the tyme as by weye off
reson men shold not slepe that is by
the morowe but ys it were cause reso-
nable. for soth in the morowe is most
couenable a man to say his prayers
for to thynke on god and to honou-
re god and to gyue almes to the pou-
re that first comen in the name off
cryst. Lo what Salamon sayth.
Whoso so wyl by the morowe a walke
to sette me he shal fynde me.

Thanne cometh neglygence or reche-
lesnes that rekyth of no thyng.

And how that Ignorance is moder
of alle harme. Certes neglygence is
the noytre. neglygence doth no force
whan he shold doo a thyng whether
he doo it wel or badly. Of the reche-
dye of thysse two synnes as sayth the
wyse man that he that dredeth god
sparyth not to doo that hym ought
to doo. And he that soupyth god wyl
do dyspence to please god by his wer-
kes and habounden hym self wpth
al his myght wel for to doo. Thanne
cometh ydlenes that is the pate of all
harmys an ydle man is lyke to a
place that hath no wallys the deuyl
may entre on euery syde. This ydlen-
es is the thurrogh of alle dyspleys-
and of alle Jans-
gys. triffys and al ordure. Certes heuyn
is geuen to hym that wyl labour and
not to ydle men. Eke dauid sayth.

The Persons tale

That they be not in the labour off
men ne they shall not be whyped
wpyth men that is to saie in purga-
to: y. Certes theie semyth it they shal
be tounentyd wpyth the deupl in hel-
le. But yf they doo penytence. Then-
ne comyth the synne that men depen-
troddas as whan a man is so lettyd
and so taryed or he wyl turne to god
and certes that is a grete folye. he is
lyke hym that falleth in the dyche &
wyl not aryse. And this vice comyth
of fals hope that he thynketh that he
shalle lyue long but that hope fayl-
leth ful oft. Thanne comyth laches
that is he that whan he begynneth
ony good werke anon he wyl forlete
it and stynte as doo they that haue
ony wyght to gouerne and take off
hym ne kepe. Anon as they synde o-
ny contrarpe or ony anoye. Thysse
ben the newe shepherdes that leten
her sheep wpyngly goo ronne to the
wolf that is in the brekes and do no
force of her owen gouernaunce. Off
this comyth pouerte and destruction
both of spirituel and temporel thyn-
ges. Thanne comyth a maner of cold-
nes that fretheth alle the herte of man
Thanne comyth vndeoucion thurgh
whiche a man is so blont. As sayth
saint Bernard and hath suche lan-
gour in his sowle that he ne may re-
de ne synge in holy chyrchen & here ne
thynke of deuocion ne traueple with
hys hondes in no good werke but it
is to hym vnsauoye and alle apal-
lyd thanne weyith he sore sluggyshe

and slumbry & soon wyl he be wroth
and soon is enclyned to hate and to
enue. And thanne comyth the synne
of worldly sorowe. that is clepyd tris-
ticia. that sleeth a man as saith saint
Doul. For certes suche sorowe wet-
tyth to the deth of the deth of the so-
ule and of the body also. For thers
comyth that a man is anoyed of his
owen lyf for suche sorowe shourpeth
the lyf of many a man or that his ty-
me come by waye of kynde. Apenst
this horryble synne of accidye & the
braunchis of the same there is a ver-
tue that is called fortitudo or streng-
the that is affection thurgh whiche
man despyseth alle other thynge no-
yous. This vertu is so myghty and
so bygorous that it dar wpyth stanc
myghtyly & wraile apenst the saw-
tes of the deupl and wpycly kepe him
self fro parrells that ben wycked.
For it enhaufyth & enforpeth the suol
right as accidye abateth it & maluth
it feble for this fortitudo may endu-
re wpyth long sustaunce the traueple-
ys that ben couenable. This vertu
hath many spyces the first is cleped
magnanymyte that is to saie grete
corage. For certes there behoueth gre-
te corage apenst accidye lest that yf
swalowe the fowle by the synne off
sorowe or destrope it wpyth wanhope
This maketh folke to vndertake
hard and greuous thynge by her o-
wen wyl wpycly and resonably. And
for as moche as the deupl fighteth a-
penst man more by queynesse and by

The Persons Tale

Steyght than by strengthe therefore a
 man shal wythstonde hym by wyte
 by reason and by discrecion. Thanne
 ben there the vertues of feyth and ho-
 pe in god and in his sayntes to achy-
 uen and complishe the good werkes
 in whiche he purposeth firmly to co-
 tinue. Thanne comyth seuerite and
 splicitnes. And that is whan a man
 doth and perfourmeth grete werkes
 of goodnes that he hath begonne.
 And that is the ende why men sholde
 doo good werkes. for in the com-
 plisshyng of good werkes lieth the
 grete guerdon. Thanne is the confide-
 ce that is stableness of courage.
 And this shold be in herte by stedfast
 feyth and in mouth and in berpunge
 in chere and in dede. Eke there ben
 no speryal thynges and remedies a-
 gainst accorde in diuerse werkes a-
 in consyderation of the peyne of helle
 and of the Joye of heuen. And in
 trust of the grace of the holy ghoost
 that wyl geue hym myght to persue-
 me his entente.

Sequitur de Avaricia.

After Acridye now we thyl a
 speke of auarice and of co-
 uetyse of whiche synne said
 Saynt Poule. The rote of al synne
 is couetyse. for sothly whan the her-
 te of a man is confounded in hit self
 and troublid that they soule hath
 lost the comforte of god. Thanne se-
 hath he an ydle solas of wordly thyng

ges. Auarice after descripcion of saint
 Austyn is a lichetousnes in herte to
 haue earthly thynges. Somme other
 folke that auarice is for to purcha-
 se many earthly thynges and nothing
 care to hem that haue nede. And vnder-
 stande well that auarice is not
 only in good and in catel. but som-
 tyme in science and in glorie and in e-
 uery outrageous thynges is auarice
 and couetyse. And the difference by-
 twene auarice and couetyse is this.
 Couetyse is for to coueyte suche thin-
 ge as thou hast not. And auarice is
 to wythholde and to kepe suche thyng-
 ges as thou hast wythout ryghtfull
 nede. Sothly this auarice is a syn-
 neful dampnable for al hols wyte
 cursyth it a spekyth against it for hit
 doth wrong to Ihesu Cryst. for it
 betrayeth fro hym the loue that men
 to hym owen a comyth it backward
 against alle reason and makyth that
 the auarous man hath more hope
 in his catel thanne in Ihesu Cryst.
 And therefore sayth Saynt Poule.
 That an auarous man hath more
 hope in his thealdom of ydolatrie
 than in god. what difference is be-
 twix an ydolastre and an auarici-
 ous man. Peraventure an ydolastre
 hath but one maniment or two.
 And the auaricious man hath ma-
 ny. for certes euery floreyne in hy-
 coffre is his maniment. And certes
 the synne of manimentrye god forbide-
 deth in the ten commaundementis as
 beryth wytynges. E. po. pp. cap. Thou

shalt haue no fals goddis biforn me
ne thou shalt make the no graupd
thyng But an auaricious man lo-
ueth more his tresour forgyd. And
through this synne of auarice & of co-
uetyse comyth thysse hard lordshippis
through whiche men bestreyned by ta-
lagys customs and carpagys more
than her dute or reson is. Di ellys ta-
ke they of her bond men amercimen-
tis. whiche myght more resonably
be callyd extorcionis than amercime-
tis. Of whiche amercementis and
raunsonyngys of bond men. Some
me lordys stywardys sayn that it is
ritghful. For as mychel as a choule
hath no temporel thyng that it ne is
hys lordys as they sayn. But certes
thysse lordshyppis don wrong that be
gyuen her bonde folke thynges that
they neuer pas hem. Augustynus de
ciuitate dei libro .x. Sayth that soth
is that the condycion of thraldom &
the first cause of thraldom is for sin-
ne. Genesis 9. Thus may we see h
the gyfte deserueth thraldom and not
nature. wherefo. thysse lordes shold
not glorie hem in her lordshyppis
syth that by naturel condycion they
be not lordes of her thrallys. But that
thraldom come first by synne. And
furthermore there as the lawe sayth h
temporel lordys of bonde folke ben
the goodes of her lordshyppis. ye that
is for to vnderstoude the goodys off
the emperour to defende hem in her
right but not to robbe hem ne to re-
ue hem. And therefore sayth Seneca.

Thy prudence shold spue benygnyty
wyth the thral. that thou slepest thy
thral ben goddys peple. For humble
folke ben crystes frendes. they be co-
tubernal wyth the lord. Now co-
myth discreit betwene marchaunt &
marchaunt. And thou shalt vnder-
stonde that marchandyse is in ma-
ny maners. That one is bodely and
that other is ghoostly. that one is lecf-
ful and that other is dishoneste and
vilefful. That bodely marchandyse
that is lecfful & honest is this. that
there as god hath ordeyned that a ro-
yame or a contree is suffycient to hym-
self it is honest and lecfful that the ha-
boun daunce of this contree may hel-
pe another contree that is more nede-
ful.

And therfo. ther must
be marchandyse to brynge from o-
ne contree to another theyr marchan-
dyse That other marchandyse is h
men & wimen fals othis wyth frau-
de trecherie and dyscreit wyth lesyn-
ges cursyd and dampnable Spyr-
ituel marchandyse is properly symo-
ny. That is ententys desyre to thing
spyrituell That is thyng that apper-
teyneth to the sentuary of god and
to the cure of soule. This desyre ys so
be that a man doo his dysgrence to
perfourme it. alle be it that his desy-
re take none effect. yet is it to hym a
dedely synne. And ys he be ordred he
is Irreguler. Certes symonye is des-
pyd of Symon magus that wolde
by temporell catel haue bought the
pette that god had gyuen by the hoys
ghost to seynt peter & to the appostles

The Persons Tale

And therfore Understonde ye that bo
th he that sellth and he that buyth
thynges spiritual In deppth syno-
nyas. Be it catel be it prourpung
or by fleschly prayers of his frendys
or off spoyntelle frendes.

fleschly in two maners as by kyn-
rede and by other frendys. Bothly
yf they praye for hym that is not a
ble ne worthy. it is synonye yf he ta-
ke the benefyte. And yf he be worthy
and able it is none. That other ma-
ner is when men or women prayen
for folke to auancee hem only for
wycked fleschly affection that they
haue to the persones. that is foul sy-
monye. But certes in seruyce for
whiche men yeven thynges spiritual
vnto her seru aunteys it must be vn-
derstode that the seruyse be honest or
ellys not. And eke that it be wyth-
out bargaynyng and that the perso-
ne be able. for as sayth Saynt Da-
mas. Alle the synnes of the world at
regard of this synne ben as thyng
of nought. for it is the greitest syn-
ne that may be after the synne of lu-
cifer. and of antycrist. for by this
synne god forlesyth the churche & the
soule that he bought wyth his precy-
ous bloode by hem that yeven chry-
stis to them that be not dygne.

for they put in theys that stelen the
sowlys of Ihesu Crist and destroye
his patrymonye. By suche vndigne
preestes and curates haue men the
lesse reuerence of the sacramentis off
hys churche. And suche yeuers of
churches put out the chyldeyn of crist

and put in so chirchys the deuylls
owen childe. they sellen the sowlys &
shal kepe the lambs to the wolf &
stronge hem. And therfore shal
they neuer haue parte of the pasture
of lambs that is in the blyss of he-
uen. Now cometh hasardye wyth
his appertenauntys as tablys. quar-
des. and reuellys. Of whiche cometh
dysceyt fals othis. chydnyngs. and al-
le raucyns. blasphemynge. reynyn-
g of god. hate of his neyghbours. wast
of goodys myspeyndyng of tyme.
And somtyme manslaughtur. Let-
tes hasardours may not be wyth-
out grete synne whyles they haunten
that craft. Of auarye cometh eke.
lesynge. theft. fals wytnes. and fals
othes. And ye shal Understande
these ben grete synnes and expresse
ayenst the comandements of god
as I haue sayde. fals wytnes is eke
in word and in dede. In worde as to
bytreue thy neyghbours good name
by thy fals wytnessyng or accusest
hym by thy fals wytnes. or eellys ex-
cusyst thy self falsely. Ware ye quest-
mongers and notaries. Lettes for
fals wytnes was susanna in grete
for owe and peyn & many another
mo. The synne of theft is expresse al-
so ayenst goddys heft & that in two
maners. temporel & spiritual. The
temporel thefte is as for to take thy
neyghbours catel ayenst his wyl be
it be force or by styght be it in metung
or mesure. by fleyng by fals endyte-
mentys pon hym. & in borowynge

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thy neyghbours catel in entent neuer
to paye and semblable thynges.

Spyrituel theste is sacrilege þ is to
sape outyng of holy thynges. or off
thynges sacred to Crist in two ma-
ners. By reson of the holy place. As
chircheperdys for euery dyolent syn-
ne that men doo in suche place may
be cleppd sacrilege. Also they that
falsely wythholde the ryghtes of holy
chirche. and pleyne and generally sa-
crilege is to reue holy thyng out off
holy place. or vnholy thyng out off
holy place. or holy thyng out off vnholy
place.

Now
shal ye vnderstonde that reuelynge
of auarice is misericorde and pite
largely taken. And men myght aye
why that misericorde and pite in re-
uelynge of auarice. Certes the auarice
cyons man shewed no pite ne mise-
ricorde to the nedefull man for he desi-
teth hym in keepynge of this tresour. &
not in the rescowynge ne in the rele-
uyng of euery Cristen. And therfore
speke I first of misericorde.

Than is myserycorde as saith
the phylosophre a vertu by whiche
corage of mā is styred by the mysese
of hym þ is mysese. vpon the wiche
myserycorde wyte pite in persoun-
myng of charitable werkes of mer-
cy helpeth and conforteth hym that
is mysese. And certes this meuyth
men to the myserycorde of Ihesu cris-
te that hym self suffred for our gylt
he suffred deth for myserycorde and
forpaf vs our orgynal synnes and
therby releved fro the payne of helle &

amenuyd the payn of purgatorie
The spyes of misericorde ben as for
to lene and eke for to prue And for
to foryeue and for to relect. and for
to haue pite in herte and compassy-
on of myschyes of thyng euery cristen
And eke chastyte there as nede is.

Another remedye agens auarice is
resonable larges. But sochly her be
houeth the consyderacion of our lord
Ihesu Crist and of his grace and
of his temporel goodys and eke off
the goodys perdurable that crist gaf
vs. And eke to haue remembraunce
of the deth that he shal deye and recey-
ue. And he woot not whan And eke
that he shal forgoon alle that he hath
dyspendyd and goten in goodys.

But for as moche as soueraine folke
be vniuersurable. men oughten esche-
we fool largesse þ men clepen waste.

Certe he that is fool large he pe-
neth not his catel but he lesyth his ca-
tel Certes what thyng that he pe-
neth for veynglorie as to minstrels
and to folke that bere his renome in
the world he hath doo synne and no-
ne almes. Certes he that lesyth fool
his good and lesyth no thyng but
synne. He is lyk to an hors that se-
kyth rather to drynke droppye water
a troubyl thā water of the clere well
To hem apperteynen the malyson þ
Criste shal prue atte day of dome to
hem that shul be dampned.

Sequitur de Gula.

After auarice comyth glotonye. whiche is expresse & pensit the commaundement of god. Glotonye is vnmesurable appetyte to ete or to drynke. & ellys to ete vnmesurably & out of tyme more than nedeth is glotonye. This synne corruptid al this worlde as is wel shewyd in the synne of Adam & Eue. Lo ete what sayth saynt Poule of glotonye. Many men sayth he of whiche I haue oft sayde pou. and now I saye it wepyng that they be enemies of the crosse of cryst. Of whiche the ende is deth and of whiche her wombe is her god. and her glorie in confusion of hem that so seruyth erthely thynges. He that is vsaunt to this synne of glotonye. He may no synne wythstonde. He mote be in seruage of alle vyces for it is the deuyls horde there he hydeth hym in and restyd. This synne hath many species. The first is dronkenes. that is the horrible sepulture of mannyngs reason. And therefore whan that a man is dronke he hath lost his reason and this is dedely synne. But certes whā a man is not wont to straunge drynke & perauerture knowyth not the strength of the drynke or hath febleness in his hede or hath trauepylled thyngh whiche he drynke the more. all be he sodeynly caught with drynke it is no dedely synne but venyal. The second species of glotonye is. that the spiryte of a man wayyth all trouble. For dronkenes betrueth hym discre-

cid of his wyll. The third species of glotonye is whan a man deuouryth hys mete and hath no rightful maner of etyng. The fourth is whan thurgh the grete habundance of his mete the humours of his body ben distempereyd. The fyfthe is forgetfulness by to moche drynkynge. For whiche a man forgetyth by the morowe what he dyd ouer Eue. In another maner ben distyncte the species of glotonye after saynt Gregore. The first is for to ete before tyme. The second is whā a man getyth hym to despycate mete. The thyrde is whan a man taketh to myght ouer mesure.

The fourth is curyosity wyth grete entente to maken and apparaylle his mete. The fyfthe is for to ete greddly. And these ben the fyue syngers of the deuyls honde by whiche he drawyth folke to synne. Apenst glotonye is the remedye abstinence off his body and sayth Calpene. But holden I not meritorie yf he doo hit only for hele of hys body. Saynt Austyn wole y abstinence be do by vertu and wyth patience. Abstinence he saith is lytyl worth but yf he haue good wyll. & but he be enforced by patience & by charyte. And y men do it for goddys sake. & in hope to haue the blysse in heuen. The felawes of abstinence ben atteperance that holdeth the mene in al thynges ete shame y eschewyth al dysyhoneste suffaunce y seeketh no riche metys ne drynkes ne doth no force off none or tragicous apparaylyng of mete.

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Also that refreyneth by reson the
delaupe apetyte of etyng and dryn-
kyng. Sobrenes also that refreyn-
neth the outrage of drynke. Spa-
ryng also that refreyneth the dyscas-
te ease to sytte long at his mete. Wher
fore somune folke stonden of her o-
wen wylle whan they ete by cause
they wyl ete at lasse leysur.

Sequitur de Luxuria.

After Glotony thenne co-
mynly lecherie. for thyse two
synys ben so nygh cosyns
that oft tyme they wyl not departe.
God woot this synne is full dysple-
saunt to god. For he sayde hym self
doo no lecherie. And therfore he put-
teth gret peynes agens this synne.
For in thold lawe if a woman thral
were taken in this synne she shold
be betyn wth staups to the deeth.
And yf she were a gentyl woman
she shold be slayn wth stones. And
yf she were a bysshoppys daughter
she shold be brent by goddys com-
maundement. Furthermore for the
synne of lecherie god dreynit alle the
world. And after that he brent syue
cytees and sank down in to helle.
Now lete vs speke thenne of the syn-
ne of lecherie þ men clepen aduoul-
trye that is of weddyd folke that is
to saie yf that one of hem ben wed-
dyd or ellys bothe.

Saynt Johan sayeth þ thauowtrens
shulle be in a synkyng brennyng

pytte of fyre and brenston for leche-
rie is lykened to brenstone for the
synk of her ordure. Certes the bere-
uyng and brykyng of this Sacra-
ment is an horryble thyng. hit was
made of god hym self in paradyse &
confermed by Ihesu Cryste.

As sayth Saynt Mathew in the gos-
pel A man shall lete fader and moder
and take hym to hys wif. And they
shal be two in one flesh. This sacra-
ment betokeneth the kryptyng to gy-
der of Cryste & holy chirche. & not on-
ly that god forbade auowtry in de-
de. But eke he commaunded þ thou
sholdest not couepte thy neyghbours
wif. In this hecst saith saint Austyn
Almaner couetyse to doo lecherie is
forboden. Lo what sayth Saynt
Mathew in the gospel who so seeth
a woman to couetyse of his lust. he
hath don lechery wth her in his her-
te. Here may ye se þ not only the dede
of this synne is forbode. But eke the
desyre to do þ synne. This cursyd
synne anopeth greuouusly hem that it
haunte & first to the soule. For he ob-
ligeth it to synne & to peyne of deeth þ
is perdurable. & to the body anopeth
it greuouusly. For it dryeth hym. And
of his blood he makyth sacrafyse to
the fende of helle. hit wastyth his ca-
tel and his substaunce. & certes yf hit
be a soul thing a man to waste hys
catel on women. yet is it a fouler
thing þ whan for surche ordure wo-
men spenden vpon men her catell &
substance. This synne as sayth the

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prophecie berueth a man & a womā
 her good fame and alle her honoure
 And it is ful playfawnt to the deuyl
 forther by wyrmeth he the most par
 ty of this world. And right as a
 marchant delpteth hym moost in
 chaffare that he hath most auanta
 ge of. Ryght so delpteth the fende in
 this ordure. This is that other hand
 of the deuyl wpyth spue fygres to cat
 che the peple to this Bilonie. The first
 fpynger is the foule lokyng of the fol
 woman that sleth right as the basily
 colik sleeth folke by the benym of his
 fpyght. for couetyse of the epen folow
 weth the couetyse of the herte. The
 second fpynger is the vylaynis tou
 chyng in wycked maner. And ther
 fore sayth Salamon. That who so
 touchyth and handelyth a woman.
 he sayth lyke hym that handelyth
 the scorpyon that styngeth and so
 depnly sleth thurgh his cruenymyng
 or as who so touchyth pitche he shen
 dyth his fpyngrys. The third is foule
 wordes that sayth lyke fyre h been
 nyth that right anon breunyth the
 herte. The fourth is kyssyng. & trew
 ly he were a grete foole h wold kisse
 the mouth of a breymyng ouryn or of
 a furnep. And more foolis ben they
 that kyssen in vylonpe for h mouth
 is the mouth of helle.

And namely thys olde do
 tardys holours yet wyl they kyss
 though they may not do and smater
 hem. Certes they be lyke to houndys
 for an hound whan he comyth by
 the Roser or by other benchys yf he

may not pisse yet wyl he heur by his
 legge and make contenauce to pisse

And for that man wenyth that he
 may not spurne for lichorousnes that
 he doth wpyth his wpyf. Lettes that
 oppnyon is fals. Good woot a man
 may sle him self with his owen wyf
 and make hym dronk wpyth his o
 wen tonne. Certes be it wpyf or chyld
 or worldy thyng that he loupd be
 fore god it is his mawment. and he
 is an ydolastre. man shold loue his
 wpyf by dyscrecion patiently and at
 temperatly. & than is she as though
 she were his suster. The fyfthe fpyn
 ger of the deuyls honde is the styng
 kyng dede of lecherpe. He gryppeth
 hym by the reynes for to throwe him
 in to the furnepys of helle. there as
 they shal haue the fyre and the wor
 mys that euer shal lastyn. wepyng
 & walyng. sharpe hunger and thirst
 Crisplynes of deuyls that shul alle
 to trede hym wpythout respite & wpyth
 outhende. Of lecherpe as I sayd
 fourden dyuerse spyes as fornicat
 ion h is betwpy man and woman
 that ben not maryed & this is dedely
 synne & apenst nature & destructid to
 nature is apenst nature. Persey the re
 son. tellyth hym eke that it is dedely
 synne for as moche as god forbade le
 cherpe. & saint Poule peucth hym the
 regne h is due to no wyght. But to
 hem h dono dedely synne. another syn
 of lecherpe is to betruen a mayde off
 her maydenshede. for certes he h so dot
 he catchid a mayde out of the hieft de
 gre h is in this present lyf. & betrueth

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her that precious fruyt that the boke
clepeth the hondred fruyt. I can save
it none other wyse in Englyssh. But
in latyn it is called centesimus fructus.

Certes he that so doth is cause of
many dominages & bylonys more
than any man can reken. Ryght
as he somtyme is cause of alle dom-
magys that bestys doo in the felde &
breketh the hedge of the colture thur-
gh the whiche he distropeth & may not
be restorped. For certes nomore may
maydenshede be restored than an ar-
me that is synken fro the body may
retorne aghen to weye. She may ha-
ue merry this woot I wel. yf she do
penyence. But neuer shal it be. But &
she is corrupt. And al be it so that I
haue spoke somewhat of auoultrye
it is good to shewe mo perylls that
longen to auoultrye for to eschewe
the foule synne of auoultrye. In
latyn it for to save thapprochyng of
another manys bed. thurgh which
they that were one flessh habounden
her bodies to other persones. Of
this synne as sayth the wyse man co-
me many harmes. first brekyng off
seyth. & certes seyth is kepe of cryste-
dome. And whan that kepe is bro-
ken & low certeyn crystendom stan-
deth wythout fruyt. This synne is
eke theft for thefte generally to spe-
ke of. is for to reue a thyng of a ma-
n agens his wyl. Certes this is the
foulest thefte that may be whan a
woman steleth her body from her
husbond & prynceth it to her helour to

defoule it. and steleth her soule from
cryst and prynceth hit to the deuyl.

This is a foule theft for to stele and
breke the chalis. for thys aduoul-
teris breken the temple of god spiri-
tuelly and steleth the vessel of grace.
That is the body and the soule. For
whiche Cryst shalle destroye hem as
sayth saynt Poule. Bothly of this
theste doubtid gretey Joseph. whan
that his lordes wyf prayed hym off
bylonye whan he sayde. Lo my lady
how my lord hath take to me. Un-
der my warde all that he hath vnder
this wourde. No thyng is out of
my power but only ye & be hym wyf

And how shold I thenne doo this
wyckednes and synne soo horryble
agens god. Alas al to sptyl is suche
trouthe now I founde. The thyrde
harme is. the spylthe thurgh whiche
they breke the commaundement off
god and defoule the auter of her ma-
trimonye that is Cryst. For certis-
in so myght as the sacrament of mar-
ryage is so noble and so dygnyte soo
moche it is the gretter synne to bre-
ke it. For god made marryage in pa-
radyse in the state of Innocencye to
multiplye mankind to the seruire of
god. & therfore is the brekyng therof
greuous. Of whiche brekyng come
fals heyres. often tyme & wrongfully
occupyen folkes herytages. & therfo-
re wyl crist put hem out of the regne
of heuyn that is herytage to good fol-
ke. Of this brekyng comyth
eke that folk be vnder wedde. Da

spune woth her owen kpurde. And
namely the herlotis that haunter
Bordellis. Thise fool women moue
be lykened to a comyn gonge where
as men purge her ordure. What saie
we eke of putters that lyuen by the
horrible synne of putte. and con-
streyne women. yf somune her owen
wypys or his chyldre as don thise ba-
wds to yelde hem a certeyn rente of
her bodely putte. Certes thise ben
curspd synners. Understonde ye eke
that aduoultre is sette compulsi in
the ten commandmentis betwene
thet and manslaughter. for it is the
grettest thete that may be. for it is
thet of body and of soule And it is
lyke to homocide. for it keryth a
two hem that first were made one
flesch. And by the olde lawe they
shold be slayn. But neuertheles by
the lawe of Ihesu cryst that is the la-
we of pyte. whan he sayd to the wo-
man that was founde in auoutre.
and shold haue be slayn woth stones
after the wyll of the Jewys as was
her lawe. Goo quod Ihesu cryst and
haue no more wyll to doo synne.

Sothly vengeance of aduoultre
is awarded to the peny of helle.

But it be dystourchyd woth penailce
ye ben there mo spces of this cur-
spd synne as whan that one of them
is reygroun or ellys bothe. or of fol-
ke that ben entrid in to ordre as sub-
delyn. or delyn. prest or hospitalers
And euer the hys that he is in ordre
the gretter is the synne. for they ha-
ue made grete bowys to kepe chasty-

te. This synne of brelpyng off hys
auowe of chastyte is whan he recey-
ued ordre. And soth it is that holy or-
der is chys of alle the tresour of god
and is a special spgne and marke of
chastyte which that is the moost pre-
cious sp that is. And eke this or-
dred folke ben specially tited to god
for whiche whan they doo dedely syn-
ne. they ben the special traptours off
god and of his peple. for they lyue
by the peple to praye for the peple.

And whyles they be suche traptours
her prayers auayle not to the peple
Prestys ben as aungells as by the
mystery of her dygnyte. But forsoth
Saynt Poule sayth that sathanas
trausfourmeth hym in an aungel of
lyght. Sothly the prest that haun-
tyth synne he may be lykenyd to an
aungel of derlines trausfourmed
in to an aungel of lyght. He semeth
an aungel of lyght. But forsoth he
is an aungel of derlines. Suche pre-
stis ben the sone of hely as is shewed
in the booke of kynges that they we-
re the sonys of belpal. that is the de-
uyl. Belpal is to saie wothouten
Juge. And yf faren they. hem thyn-
keth that they be free and haue noo
Juge nomore than hath a free boie
that takyth whiche cowe that hym
lyketh in the toun. So faren they by
women.

for right as a
free boie is ynough for alle a toun.

Right so is a corrupte Prest. y-
nough for alle a parisshe or a con-
tre. Thise prestis as sayth the booke
know not the mynistry of presthod

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to the people ne to god ne they holde hem not apayed as sayth the booke of soden flessh that was to hem of fryd. but they take by force the flessh that is rawe. Certes right so thys shrewys holde hem not a payed off rostyd flessh and soden wpyth whiche the peple seden hem in grete reuerence. But they wyl haue rawe fleshe as folkys wpyps and her doughsters. And certes thesye women that consentyng to her harlotys do grete wrong to cryste and to holy chirche to alle halowys and to alle sowlys. For they betreuen hem alle that shold worshipp cryst and holy chirche And also to prynces for alle crysten soules And therfore haue suche prestys and her lemanys that consentyng to her lecherie the malyson of the crysten court tyl they come to amendement. The thirde spye of aduoustry is somtyme betwix a nan and his wyf. And that is whan they take noo regard in theyr assemblyng but only for flesshly delyte as sayth saynt Iherome and rekke of nothyng but they be assemblyd by cause they be maryed. Al is good y enough as thynketh to hem. But in suche folk hath the deuyll power as sayde the aungel Raphael to Tobye. For in her assemblyng they put Ihesu Cryste out off her herte. and geue hem self to al omdure The fourth spye is of hem that assemblyn by her kyntrede or of hem that ben of one assynpte. Or elles wpyth hem wpyth whom her faders had deyd wpyth the synne of lecherie. This

synne makyth hem lyke houndes that taken none hede of kyntrede. And certes parentela is in two maners. or ghoosily. flesshly. ghoosily is for to delyn wpyth her goosys. For right so as a godfader is her fader spyrituel. For whiche a woman may in no lesse synne semble wpyth her goosyb than wpyth her owen broder The fyfthe synne is that abhomynable synne of whiche no man ought to speke of ne wryte. neuertheles it is openly reherced in holy wryt. Certes holy wryt may not be defouled more than the sonne that shyneth on a donhyll Another synne apperteyneth to lecherie that cometh in slepyng. And this synne cometh ofte to hem that ben maydens and eke to hem that ben corrupt. And this synne is cleped polucyon. That cometh in fourte maners. Somtyme it cometh of languysshynge of the body of man. Somtyme it cometh of Infirmyte for the feblenes of the vertue retentif as phisici makyth mencyon. Somtyme of surfete of mete and drynke. And somtyme for Spolente thoughtis that ben enclosyd in manys mynde whan he goth to slepe. whiche may not be wpyth out synne For whiche men kepe hem wpyself. Or elles may they synne greuouusly. Now cometh remedye agens lecherie. that is generally chastyte and continence that refreyneth al dysordynate incynnyngs that comyn of flesshly talentys. And cur the gretter mercyte shalle he haue that refreyneth most the wpylled chaffynge

of this sygne. And this is
in two maners. that is to saye chas-
tite of marpage and chastyte of wy-
dowehede. Now shalt thou vndersto-
de that matromonye is lesful assan-
slyng of man and woman that re-
ceyuen the vertue of the sacrament.
The bonde whiche that may not be
departyd in al her lyf. this is to saye
whyles they lyue bothe. This is as
sayth the booke a ful grette sacrament
God made it as I haue sayd in pa-
radyse and wold hym self be bound in
marpage. And for to haue we marpa-
ge he was atte weddynge where he
toured water in to wyne. whiche
was the first myracle he wroughte
in erthe to fore his dysciples. The tre-
we effect of maryage cleyneth foules
carpon and replenyssheth holy chyr-
che of good synnys. for as the ende
of marpage chaungyth dedely synne
in to benygal bptwene hem that been
weddyd & makyth the heires al one
as wel of hem as the bodyes. This
is very maryage that is stablissed
by god or that yune began whan
natural lawe was in his right point
in paradys And it was ordeyned he
a woman shold haue but one man. as
sayth saynt Anstyn by many reasons.
first that marpage is figured be-
twene cryst and holy chirche. And
another is that a man is hede of the
woma as he by ordenaunce it shold
be also. for yf a woman had moore
than one. the more shold he haue moore
hedes than one. And that were an

hauyble thynge before god. And
also a woman myght not please ma-
ny folke at once. And also there
shold neuer be persurce rest amonge
hem for euerych wold aske his owne
thynge. And forther more no man
shold knowe his owne engendrure
ne who shold haue his crytage. And
the woman shold be lasse louyd. fro
the tyme he she were romynge wth
man. Now comyth how a man
shold becomyn wth his wyf. and
namely in two thynge he is to saye i
suffraunce & in reuerence & this shewyd
first Cryst whan he first woman.
for he made her not of Adams heed.
for she shold not haue to grette lord-
shipp. for there as the woman hath
the masterye she maketh to moche dis-
aray. There nedde none examples
of this. The pynence that we haue
day by day ougtht to suffice. Also cer-
tes ne he made not the woman of the
fete of Adam. for she shold not be
holde to lowe for he can not pacient-
ly suffice. But god made woman off
the ribb of Adam. for woman
shold be folowe vnto man. Man
shold becomyn to hye wyf. in sayth.
I trouthe & in lowe as sayth saint poule
and that men shold loue his wyf as
cryst dyd holy chirche that louyd it so
wel he deyd for it. So shold a man
for his wyf yf it were nedde. Now
how he a woman shold be subget to
her husbond he tellyth Saint Peter &
also as sayth the derre. A woman as
long as she is a wyf. she hath none

authority to sterve ne to bere wytnes
wpythout leue of her husbond. And
also she shold be honest and attempe
rat of aray. I wote wel that they
shol sette her entent to plesse her hus
bond. But not by queyntise of her a
raye. Saynt Iherome sayth that wy
ues ben apataylled in splike and in
purpure may not clothe hem in ihu
capit. Saynt Gregore sayth eke þ
no wyght seeketh no precious aray
but only beyn glorie to be honoured
the more besow the peple. it is grete
folse a woman to haue grete aray
outward & her self to be fow inward
A wyf shuld eke be mesurable. in so
kping in beynng and in lawshyng &
dyscrete in al her wordes and her de
des And about all worldly thynges
she shold haue her husbond wpyth all
her herte and to hym be trewe of her
body. So shold euery husbond eke
be trewe to his wyf. for sythen alle
the body is the husbondes so shold
her herte be also. or elles there is be
tween hem two no parfayth mariage
as in that. Than shalle a man vn
derstonde that for thre thynges a mā
and his wyf moore assamble. The
first for the entent of gendrure of chyl
dren to the seruyse of god. for certes
that is the cause spual of matrimo
ny. That other is to peldre eueryche of
hem the dette of her body: for neither
of hem hath power of his owen bo
dy. The third is for the schewe leche
rye and bylonye The fourth forsoth
is dedely synne. As to the first it is

mercytorpe. The second also for
the dette sayth she hath mercyte for þ
she yeldyth to her husbond the dette
of her body. yet though it be apens
her spkyng and the lust of her herte.
The third maner whiche is to schewe
lecherie. I holde it no dedely synne.
But many of thys be not wpythout
venyal synne for the corruption and
delyte therof. The fourth maner is
to vnderstonde yf that they assamble
only for amercouse loue and for none
of the forsayd causes but for tacom
plyssh the byennynge delyte they trefe
neuer how ofte. Sothly it is a dedely
synne. And yet wpyth sorowe somme
folke wyl peyne hem more to do thā
her apetyt suffyseth. The second ma
ner of chastyte is to be clene wydowe
to eschewe the brasyng of man and
to despyre of embraasyng. of Ihesu
Cryst Thys be thō that haue ben
wyues and haue forgoon her hus
bondes. And eke woman that haue
doon lecherie. And be reueryd by pe
nauice. And certes yf that a wyf can
kepe her alle chaste by sperence of her
husbond. so þ she gaf no cause ner
none occasyon that he aglyted.
Thy were to her grete mercyte. These
maner of women þ obseruen chasty
te must be clene in herte as wel as in
body and in thought and mesurable
in clothynge and in contenance ab
stymently etyng and in drynkynge.
In spekyng and in dede. And thenne
is she vessel of the bove of the blessed
Maudeleyn that fulfyllle holy chastyte

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ful of good odour. The thyrd manner of chastite is Virgynite. And it becomyth that she be holy in herte and kene of body. Thanne is she the spouse to Ihesu Cryste. And she is the lyp of aniggellys. she is the pryssing of this world and she is as thysse martirs in Regalye. she hath in her that tynge meyn not telle. Virgynite bare our lord Ihu Crist And Virgynite was hym self. And othet remedye agens lecherie is specially to wythdrawe suche thynges as peyn occasion to that bysonye as eetyng and drynkynge. For certes whan the pot boyleth strongly. The best remedye is to wythdrawe the fyre. Sleppynge long in grete quyetie is eke a grete norpce to lecherie. Another remedye agens lecherie is that a woman or man eschew compaignie of hem by whiche he demeth to be temptyd for alle be it so that the dede be wythstonde yet is there grete temptation. Sothly a whyte wal althoughe it brene not fully by the stynging of a candel. yet is the wal blacke off the lycht. In lyke wyse othe tymes suche persones haue euyl name by cause they drawe in vicious compaignie. Wel ofte tyme haue I redde that no man trust in his owne perfection but he be stronger than Samson. Holper than Dauid. Wyser than Salamon. Now after as I haue declared how as I can of the vii. dedes by synnes and somme of her brauns and he remedies. Sothly yf I

coude I wold telle you the ten commandmentis. but so hygh a doctryne I late to bypnyes. But neuertheless I trust to god they be touchyd in this trectyse eueryche of hem alle.

Ad huc secunda pars penitencie.

Now as to the second parte of penitencie stont in confession of mouth as I began in the second chapitre to fore. Saynt Austyn sayth synne is in euery woide and in euery dede. And alle that men coueten agens the salwe of Ihesu Cryste And this is for to synne in herte in mouth and in dede by the fyue wyttys. that ben synghet. heeryng synellynge. tastynge or sauourynge and felyng. Now is it good to vnderstonde the circumstaunces that aggrudgen my lylle euery synne. Thou shalt consydere what thou art that dost the synne. wheter thou be male or female. pong or olde. gentyl or thral. fre or seruaunt. wyse or fool. hool or syke. wedded or single. ordred or vnorred. clerik or secular. yf she be of the kyntide bodyly or ghoslyly or none. a mayden or none. in maner of homiade or none. howyble grete synne or smal. and how longe thou hast contynued in synne. The thyrd Circumstaunce is the place where thou hast don synne. wheter in othe mennys howsis or in thy own. In felde or in chirche or in chyrche. In chirche dedicate or

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non. For yf the churche were halowed
and man or woman spylle hys kynde
wpythin that place by wey of synne
ne or by wylked temptation the chir-
che were enterdoyted tyl it were recon-
ciled by the bysshop: And the preeft
sholde be enterdoyted that dyde suche
bylsonye. terme of his lyp and heshold
nomore synge masse. and yf he dyde
he shold doo dedely synne atte cuery
tyme that he song masse. The fourth
circumstaunce is by suche medpa-
tours as by messangers or for enty-
scement or for cōsentement to bere cō-
pauye wpyth felawshyp. For ma-
ny one for to bere felawshyp wyl go
to the demyl of helle. For they that
eggyng or consentyn to the synne ben
partners to the synne & of the damp-
nation of the synnar. The fyfthe
is how many tymes that he hath syn-
ned and it be in his mynde. and how
oft he hath falle. For he that ofte
fallith in synne he despyseth the mer-
cy of god and entresyth his synne.
And is unkynde to god And he wey-
yth the more feble to wpythstonde syn-
ne. And synneth the more lightly.
And the later aryseth. and the more
escheweth for to shryue hym. And
namely to hym that hath ben his cō-
fessour For whiche that folke whan
they falle aye in her olde folyes they
forseten her olde confessours al ster-
ly. Di. ellys they departen her shryfte
in dyuerse places. But sothly suche
departyd shryfte deseruyth no mercy
of god for his synnes. The syxte

circumstaunce is this why þ a man
synneth. as by what temptation.
And of hym self procure thysk temp-
tacion. or by cōtyng of other folk
or yf thou synne wpyth a woman by
force or by her owen assent. Di. yf a
waman magre her heed haue be en-
forced or not. & whether for couetyse
or pouerte. All this shalt thou telle. &
yf it was her procuring or no and
alle suche maner thynges. The se-
uenth circumstaunce is in what ma-
ner he hath doon his synne. or how þ
she hath suffryd how folke haue doyn
to her. and of the same shalle the ryght
telle alle the circumstauncis.
And yf that he haue synned wpyth co-
myn bordel women or none. in fas-
tyng tymes or none. or doon his syn-
ne in holy tymes or none. or befor
hys shryfte. or after hys latter shryfte
& hath pauertur therfor broke his pe-
nauice enoynd. bi whos help & whos
counceyl. by sorcery or craft. al must
betolde thysk thynges after that they
be grete or smale and grudge the con-
science of man or woman. And eke
the preeft that is the Iuge may the
better be auydyd of hys Iugement.
In peyng hys penauice. and what
shal be after his contricion. For
vnderstonde wel that after tyme þ
a man hath defouled hys baptysme
by synne. yf he wyl come to sauaciō
there is none other weye but penau-
ice and shryfte and satysfaction. And
namely by the two. yf there be a con-
fessour to whom he may shryue hym

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And that he first be sorry contrite and repentant And the thyrd yf he haue tyme to perfourme it. Therne shalle man folke and consydere yf he wyl make a true and a proffitable confessyon. there must be soure condicions. first it must be in sorowful bitternesse of herte as sayd the kyng Ezechye to god I wyl remembre all the ycrps of my syn in the bitternesse of my herte. This condicion of bytternes hath fyue signes. The first is that confession must be shamefaste not for to coueryn ne to hyde his syn ne But for he hath agyled his god & defouled his soule. And herof sayth Saynt Austyn. The herte traueleth for shame of hys synne. And for he hath grete shamefastnes. he is digne to haue grete mercy. whiche was the confession of the purgycane h wolde not lyste by his eyen to heuen. for he offendyd god of heuen. for whiche shamefastnes he had lost anoone the mercy of god. And therfore sayth saynt Austyn. That suche shamefast folke ben next forpewens & remysyon. That othet synne is humylyte of confessyon of whiche sayth saynt peter humbleth you vnder the myghty honde of god in confessyon for therby god forpeweth the synnes for he allone hath power. This humylyte shal be in herte and in spone outwarde. for ryght as he hath humylyte to god in his herte Right soo shold he humble his bodomitward to the priest that sytteth in goddes place for whiche in no maner. sythyns h

cryst is souerayn and the priest mane and medyatour bytwene cryst & the synnar. And the synnar is lesse by wepe of reton. Than shold nat the synnar syt as hygh as his confessour. but knele byforn hym or at his feet but yf maledye destourbe it. for he shal not take kepe who syt there but in whos place he sytteth. A man that hath trespaced to a lord and comyth for to aue mercy & make his accorde and sette hym down anon by the lord. Men wold holde hym outrageous and not worthy so sone to haue remysyon ne mercy.

The thyrd sygne is that the schryfte shold be foul of terys yf man may wepe. And yf a man may not wepe wyth his bodely eyen lete hym wepe in his herte. Suche was the confessyon of Saynt Peter.

for after he had forsake Ihesu Criste he went out and wepte ful bitterly

The fourth sygne is that he lete not for shame to shryue hym and she we hym hys confessyon. Suche was the confessyon of Wawdelene. that spared for noo shame of hem that were at the feste. for to goo to Our Lord Ihesu Criste and be knowe to hym her synne.

The fyfte sygne is that man and woman be obaysaunt to receyue the penance that is enoynd hem.

for certes Ihesu Criste for the gylte of one ma was obedynt to the deith The second condicion of sorry confessyon is that it be hastily doon.

for certes yf a man had a dedely

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wounde euer the longer þ he tarped
to warpsse hym. the more wolde hit
corrupte and haste hym to hys deth.

And eke the wounde be the worse
for to hele. It yght so farth synne
that longe tyme is in a man vnshe-
wed. Certes a man ought hastely to
shewe his synne for many causes.
And for drede of deth that cometh
oft tyme so sodenly and is in no cer-
teyn what tyme it shal be ne in what
place And eke the longer he taryeth
the farther is he fro Cryst. And yf he
abeyde vnto his last daye. scarcely
may he shryue or amende hym for
hys synnes or repete hym for the gre-
uous maladye of his deth. And for
as moche as he hath not his lyf her-
kenyd Ihesu Cryste whan he hath
spoken vnto hym. he shal crye vnto
our Lord at his last day and skar-
cely he shalle herken hym vnderston-
de þ his condycion must haue foure
thynges first that thy shryfte be pur-
ueyed a fore and auysed. And that a
man can shryue hym of hys synnes
be it of pryde or of enuie & soo forth
wyth the spyes and circumstaunces
And that he haue comprehendyd in
his mynde the nombre and the grete-
nes of his synnes and how longe he
hath leyn in synne and eke that he
be contryte of his synnes and be in-
stedfast purpoos by the grace of god
neuer este to falle aghen in to synne to
whiche he is enclined Also thou shal
shryue the of alle thy synnes to one
man. & not parcelmele to one man. &

parcelmele to another. Than is it to
be vnderstonde in thentent to patten
thy confessyon as for shame or drede
for a nyg but stranglyng in the sou-
le. For certes Ihesu Cryst is al good
in hym is none Imperfection. And
therefore he forpeneeth al parspghly.
and ellys netter a deef. I saye not yf
thou be assyned to the penitauier
for certeyn synne that thou art boun-
de to shewe hym al the remenauit of
thy synnes of whiche thou hast be
shryuen of thy curate but yf it lyke
the of thy humylyte. this is no de-
partynge of shryfte. ne I say not there
as I speke of deuyssyon of confessyō
that yf thou haue lycence to shryue
the to a discrete & an honest preest &
where the speketh. and by the lycence
of thy curate. þ thou ne mayst well
shryue the of al thy synnes. but leet
no blot behynde. lete no synne be vñ
tolde as fer as thou hast remembraun-
ce. And whan thou shalt be shryuen
of thy curate. telle hym eke al the syn-
nes that thou hast don syth thou we-
re last shryuen. Also the very shryfte
as lyth certeyn condicions. First
thou shalt shryue the by thy free wyll
not constreyned ne for shame of folke
ne for maladye or suche thynges. for
it is reson þ he that trespareth by hys
free wyll confesse his trespass. ne no-
ne oither man shal telle hys synne. ne
wrath hym aghenst the preest for hys
aunonesshyng to lete hys synne. The
second condycion is that thy shryfte
be lawful. þ is to say. thou þ shryuest

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the. & eke the preest that heareth thy confessyon benhardy in the seyth of ho-
 ly church. and that a man be not des-
 pected of the metry of Ihesu Cryst
 as Cayn and Judas were. And eke
 a man must accuse hym self of hys
 ower trespasses & not another. But
 he shal blame and wete hym self off
 of his ower malice and of his synne
 and none other. But neuertheles yff
 another man by wytheson of eny-
 syng of his synnes. or yf the estate of
 a persone be suche by whiche his syn-
 ne is agreedyd or ellys that he may
 not pleyntly shryue but he telle the
 persone whiche hath synned wyth.
 the same may he telle. So that his ac-
 cuse be not to barbyte the persone.
 But only to declare hys confessyon.
 Thou shal eke make no lesyng in
 thy confessyon for humyltye. Peter
 uenture to sape that thou hast doon
 synnes of whiche thou were neuer
 gylty. For saynt Austyn sayth. yf
 thou by cause of humyltye makest
 a lesyng of thy self though thou we-
 re not in synne afore. yet art thou in
 synne the same through thy lesyng.
 Thou shalt eke shewe thy synne by
 thy propre mouth but thou be dombe
 And not by letter. for thou that hast
 do synne thou shalt haue the shame
 of thy confessyon. Thou shalt not e-
 ke pemyte thy confessyon by sayre &
 subtil wordes to couer the more thy
 synne. For the more begylest thou thy
 self and not the preest. thou must tel-
 le pleyntly be it neuer so honnyble ne

so foul. Thou shalt eke shryue the to
 a preest that is discrete to counceyl
 the. And eke thou shalt not shryue
 the for beyn glorie ne for ppoctyspe
 ne for no cause but only for the doubt
 of Ihu Cryst & the heale of thy sou-
 le. Thou shalt not eke reune to the
 preest al sodenly to telle hym lpghtly
 thy synne as who tellyth a rape or a
 tale but awysedly wyth grete deuocy-
 on and generall to shryue the ofter
 than onys of synne whiche thou hast
 be shreuen of. it is the more meryte.
 for as sayth saynt Austyn. Thou
 shalt haue the more lpghtly relef &
 grace of god. both of synne and off-
 peyne. And certes onys a yere at the
 lest weye it is lawful for to be house-
 lyd. for sothly ones a yere al thyn-
 ges renouelyn.

Incipit tertia pars penitencie.

We haue I tolde of beyn
 confessyon his the seconde
 part of penitence. The third
 parte is satisfaccion. And standeth
 genetally in almes dede and in bode-
 ly payn. Now ben there thre maner
 of almesse contricion of herte where
 a man offtyth hym self to god. Ana-
 th. it is to haue pyte of defaute of his
 n. yghbours. The thrid is in petung
 of good counceyl and comfote bode-
 ly and ghostly where men haue ne-
 de & namely in substaunce of manys
 food. And take kepe ha man hath
 nede of these thyngs genetally he

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hath nede of food of clothyng and herberow. he hath nede of cheritable counceylling and visyting in pryson. a maladye and sepulture off dede bodyes. And yf thou mayst not byspere the nedeful wyth thy persone. Visyte hym with thy message and thy pestes. These ben the general alynesse of werkys of charite of hem that haue temporel riches or discretion in counceylling. Of these werkys shalt thou here at the dape of doine thy almesse sholdest thou doo of thy propre thynges and hastely and pryncypally yf thou mayst. But neuertheles if thou mayst not doo it pryncypally thou shalt not forbere to do almes though men see it. so that it be not do for thank of the world. but only for to haue thank of our lord Ihesu Cryste. For as wythnessyth Saynt Mathew A cyte may not be hyd that is sette vpon a mounteyn. Ne men lyght not a lantern and put it vnder a bushel but spen it vpon a candellstyk to lyghten the men in the hous. Right so shal pour lyght. lyghten before men that they mo we see your good werkys and gloryffe your fader that is in heuen. Now as for to speke of boldly prayn. it stond in prayns. in walking. in fastyng and in vertuous techyng of oryson. ye shal vnderstonde that oryson or prayers is for to saue. Appetous boys of herte that is redressyd in god and expyessing it be worde outward to remeue harmeful thynges and to haue thynges spryritual and durable and somtyme

temporel thynges. Of wyl the oryson. in the oryson of Pater noster hath Ihesu crist endowyd most thynges. Certes it is pryncypled of thre thynges in his dignyte. for whiche it is more digne than any other prayer for that Ihu cryst hym self made hit and it is short. for it sholde be coude the more spedy. and for to wythholde more esely in herte. and helpe hym self the oster wyth the oryson. And for a man shold be the lesse wery to saue it. for a man may not excuse hym to lette it. it is so shorte and so esy. And for it comprehendith in hym self alle good prayns The hypocrisye of this holy prayer that is so excellent and so digne I betake to the maysters off theologie. Saue thus moche wyl I saue. That whan thou prayest that god sholde forgyue the thynges as thou forgyuest hem that haue agryted the. Be wel ware þ thou be not out of charite This holy oryson ame myssyth eke vernal synne. And therefore it apperteyneth specially to penytence. This prayer must be truly sayd in very feyth. and that men praye to god ordynately. discretely. and deuoutly. All way a man shal put his wyl to be subiect to the wyl of god this oryson must eke be sayde wyth grete humblenes and ful pure and honesty. and not to the anoynture of any man or woman hit must eke be contynued wyth werkis of charyte. it away. lath eke ayens the vyces of the soule For as sayth Saynt Iherome.

The Parsons tale

By fastyng be sauyd the Byres of the flessh. and by prapere the Byres off the soule. After this thou shalt vnderstonde that bodely peyn stant in wakyng. For Ihesu Cryst sayth wake ye and praye ye that ye ne entre in to wycked temptation. ye shal vnderstonde that fastyng standeth in thre thynges. in forbering of bodely mete and drink. and in forbering of worldly Iolyces. And in forbering of dedely synne wpth alle hys myght. And thou shalt vnderstonde that god ordeyned fastyng. & to fastyng apperteyneth four thynges. latenes to poure folke. gladnes in herte spirituel not be angryd ne to be annoyed ne to grutchen for he fasteth.

And also resonable hour for to ete by mesure þ is to say þ a man shold not ete in vntyme ne sytte the longer at his table for he fasteth. Thine shalt thou vnderstonde that bodely peyn stondeþ in disciplyne or techyng by wryting. or by ensample. Also in weryng of hyper or of stamyn. or of an habergeon on her naked flessh for Crystis sake. and that suche manner penauens ne make not thy herte bytter or angrye annoyed of thy self. For better is to cast away thy synne þe than to cast away the sweetnes of our lord Ihesu Cryst. And therfore sayth saynt Poule. Clothe you as they that ben chosen of god in herte. Of myserproude. debonaerye. suffraunce and suche maner of clothynge. In whiche Ihesu Cryst is more apayed than in an heyr or ha-

bergeon. Than is disciplyne eke in knockyng of thy brest in scourging wpth yerdiaun knyng. in tribulacions. in sufferyng paryently wronges þ be do to him. & eke in patyent suffring of maladys. or lesynges. or worldly catel. or wyf. or chyld. or other stoundys. Thanne shalt thou vnderstonde whiche thynges destourben penauence. And this is in thre maners that is drede. shame. and wanhope that is desperation. And for to speke of drede. for whiche he weneth he may suffer no penauence. there apenst is remedye for to thynke that bodely penauence is but short atte regarde of helle that is cruel and soo longe that it lastyth wpythouten ende. Now apenst shame that a mā hath to shryue him. Shold a man thynke by wape of reason That he hath not be aschamed to doo foule thyng. Lettes hym ought not to be aschamed to doo far thynges and good thynges. And that is confessyons. A man shold thynke that god woot alle hys thoughtis and hys werkes and to hym maye nethyng be hyd ne couerdy.

Men shold eke remembre hem of the shamethat is to come at the day off doome to hym that ben not penitent in this present lyf. For al the creaturis in heuene and in erthe and in hell shul see appertly al that they hyden in this world. Now for to speke off hem that ben so nedygent and slowe to shryue hem. it stondeþ in two maners. That one is that he hopeth to lyue longe & for to durcharche moche

repres for his delpte. And thence wil
he shewe hym as he sayth. he may
as hym semeth tyme to come
to shifte Another is the surquidrye
that he hath in Crystes mercy. And
apens the first he shal thynke houre
lyf is in no spernes. And eke that
alle the riches of the world is in auen-
ture and passyng as a shadowe on
a wal. As sayth saynt Gregore that
it apperteyneth to the grete rightwis-
nesse of god. that neuer shal the pey-
ne stynte of them h neuer wold with-
drawe hem fro synne her thankyes
but euer cōtinued in synne. for that
perpetuel wyl to do synne that. they
haue perpetuel peyne. wanhope is
in two maners. The first wanhope
is in the mercy of god. That othet is
that they thynke that they may not
longe perseuere in goodnes. The
first wanhope comyth of that he de-
meth that he hath synned so grete-
ly so ofte. and so longe leyn in synne h
he shal not be sauyd Certes apens
that cursyd wanhope he shold thyn-
ke that the passyon of Ihesu Cryst
is more stronge to subynde than su-
ne is to bynde. And apens the secon-
de wanhope he shal thynke h as ofte
as he sayleth. he shal crysen by pen-
tence And though he neuer so longe
haue leyn in synne The mercy of
Cryst is alway redy to receiue hym
to mercy Apens that wanhope that
he shold not longe perseuere in good-
nes he shal thynke that the feblenes
of the deuyll may no thyng doo but


men wol suffre hym. And eke he shal
haue strengthe of god and of alle hys
chirche and of the protection of aun-
gels of hym lyf. Thence shal men
vnderstonde what is the fruyt of pe-
naunce. & after the word of Ihu crist
It is endles blyss of heuene There
ioye hath no contraryspte of woo-
ne greuaunce there alle harmys be
past of this present lyf there as is sp-
ken fro the peynes of helle. there
as is the blessyd compaignie that re-
ioysen euermore euermore of ioyes Io-
ye. there as the body of mā that why-
lom was foul & derke is more clere
than the sonne. there as whylom the
body was seke and freel. febel and
mortal. Is immortal & soo. stronge &
soo hool that ther may nothyng en-
payre it. there as nether is hunger ne
thrist ne colde. but euery soule reple-
nished wth the spght of the par-
spght knowyng of the trinite. This
blessyd regne may man purchase by
pouert spyrtyuel & the glorie by low-
nesse. the plente of Ioie by hunger
and thrist. And the reste by trauayll.
and the lyf by deth and mortyfication
of synne. To that lyf he be
brynged that bought be wth hys pre-
cious blood Amen.

[Faint, mostly illegible handwritten text in a cursive script, likely from a 16th or 17th-century manuscript. The text is written in dark ink on aged, slightly stained paper.]



1593



and the killing tale of a carpenter, his wife
 and the Rev. or Bayly who was a carpenter, his tale of a Miller
 with the Cooks tale of a vicious apprentice.
 11th - The man of Lawes tale, of a papist legend of Custance &c.
 The merchants tale, of old gannet, and how he was
 the sonnes tale, of Cassius, of an Indian boy, Calisto
 the Frenchmans tale, of downagus, and the regent, Aristotle &c.
 the wife of bathes tale, of a knight of King Arthurs court
 the priors tale, of a sompnoare. 
 the sompnoares tale, of a freere.
 the clerk of Oxforde tale, of a dargyle, a patient, &c.
 the Monks tale, of Cecily, and Valerian, a papist legend.
 the Chanoins yeman tale, of the Philosopher &c.
 the Doctor of Physicks tale, of Virgynus, his daughter
 prints an unjust page.
 14th - The goodwives tale, of three libbydines, there going to
 with to kill him & how they found him.
 the shipwreck tale, of a marthens, & his wife, & a monk.
 the prioresse tale, of a little child, & his sorcerer.
 Chaucers rime of S. Topsy, & his tale, in prose being a
 of the Celestus, & his wife, & his daughter.
 the Monks tale, of the trauellours, & the fall of a knight
 comes down to Cressus.
 16th - The Nuns priest tale, of a poor wilow, & his cooe & his
 the manciples tale, of Phobus turning his head in
 the persons tale, in prose.